

MA ANANDAMAYI

BY
DEVOTEES

MA ANANDAMAYI ASRAM
B2/94 Bhadaini, Benares

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*Dedicated
To
Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi
on the occasion of
Her
Fiftyfirst Birthday Celebration*

**मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व श्रोश्व प्रज्ञां च
विधेहि नः । प्र. उ. २-१३**

Just as mother protects her children, so do
Thou, O Mother of all Life, protect and bless
us all with divine BEAUTY and WISDOM.

FORE-WORD

The present volume is an humble tribute of love, reverence and appreciation on the part of Mother Anandamoyi's devotees and admirers from far and near. The need for such a book in English on Mother and Her Lila has long been felt by countless men and women who have had the good fortune to come in contact with Her during Her travels all over India and who are naturally anxious to know more and more about Her and to share Her blessings. The present attempt, it is hoped, will give a wider publicity to Her advent.

This was the dearest wish of Bhaiji (late Babu Jyotish Chandra Roy, I. S. O. subsequently known as Swami Mounananda Parvat) that ardent and high-souled devotee of Mother, whose spirit of renunciation and breadth of vision will always remain a source of inspiration to us. But like so many of his other noble projects, it was not destined to be fulfilled in his life-time. Those who have read his books on Mother in Bengali viz. Matri Darsan and Sat-Bani, cannot but feel that had he been alive he would have been the person most admirably fitted for this task.

The present volume, bearing as it does, evident marks of hasty production and of various restrictions on book-prints, makes no claim or pretence to reach the standard aimed at. Mother has so many phases of Her Lila that it is humanly impossible to represent even a fraction of Her ways in any written sketch. This small volume does no more than gather a few reminiscences and appreciations of Mother. It is intended to be offered to Her on the occasion of Her 51st Birth-Day Anniversary celebrations in Calcutta.

We wish to convey our sincere thanks to the contributors to the present volume for their prompt responses to our appeal. We express our regret that we could not, for want of time, approach all devotees of Mother for their contributions to the present volume nor has it been possible due to limited space at our disposal, to publish all the articles gratefully received by us. We can assure them all, that there is a desire to publish similar volumes in future in which the articles now held over, will, it is hoped, find a place. We offer our grateful thanks to all those brothers who have given their unstinted services to prepare this volume for publication.

The present enterprise represents only a feeble attempt on our part to present Mother's ways to the readers. She has a thousand facets through which She sheds Her radiance to the world. We, are painfully conscious of our limitations. To all sincere devotees of Mother our effort would look like that of a man seeking to worship the Sun by offering a tiny candle flame.

To those who have not seen Mother at all the present volume would appear to border on sheer extravagance of language and sentiments. Our request to them is to come in touch with Mother directly to see and judge for themselves before they arrive at a decision.

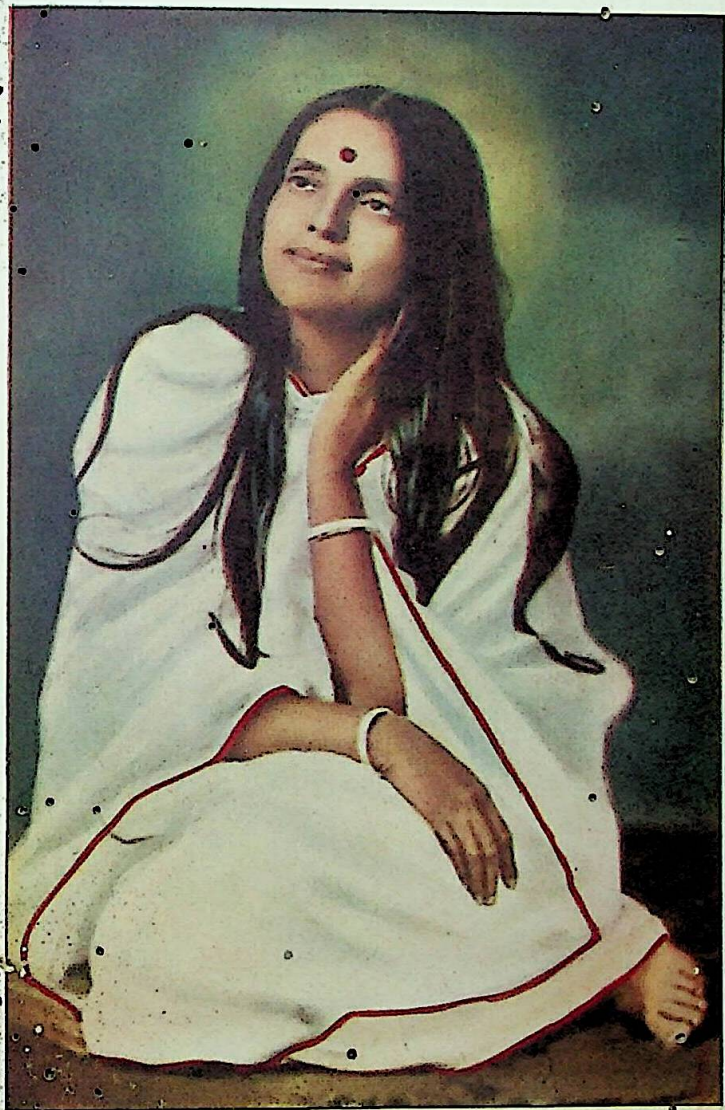
In this volume are collected, like flowers of different hues and fragrance in a posy or garland, the various tributes of love, reverence and devotion of Her children.

May this humble homage find a place at the hallowed feet of Mother !

Devotees.

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A HYMN TO MOTHER ANANDAMAYI

*(Translated from Bhaiji's Matri-Darsan
by G. Dasgupta)*

Glory to Thee, Sri Anandamayī Ma ;
Thou dwellest in every soul in absolute purity
through all times, O Mother !

Thy lustre, Mother Nirmala, illumines
the universe ; Thou art all aglow with
the radiance of heavenly virtues !

O Mother !

Thou art Gouri incarnate, Queen of all kingly
power ; Thou dost symbolise OM in swaha
and swadha, O Mother !

To all eyes Thou shinest, O Mother, with
surpassing divine grace ; Thou art the absolute
Reality, supremely beautiful and perfect,

O Mother !

The Sun and the Moon are thy twin ear-drops ;
the deep blue of the boundless sky are Thy mass
of hairs, the universe Thy Glorious Form,

O Mother !

Thou art the glamour of all the riches
of the world, sweetness incarnate, radiant
with all the splendour of life, O Mother !

Thou art as charming as Laksmi is to Visnu,
ever full of peace, tranquility and mercy ;
all gods and goddesses emanate from Thy Person,
O Mother !

Thou art the dispenser of all happiness,
all blessings of life, of love and devotion,
of divine wisdom and salvation ; all flow from
thee, O Mother !

The universe is Thy offspring ; Thou dost
nurture it with all tenderness, and finally give
it a reposeful shelter in Thy bosom,

O Mother !

A HYMN TO MOTHER

3

The very life of Thy devotees art Thou ;
 Thou art divine grace incarnate and the saviour
 of this world and the two next,
 O Mother !

Thou art the very fountain of all causes
 and effects, far beyond the bounds of all harmony
 and discord ; the prime mover of all divine
 forces art Thou, O Mother !

Thou art the spell of all wisdom, the charmer
 of all Yogis ; all the terrors of earthly life
 are dispelled by Thy presence,
 O Mother !

The soul of all the Mantras and Bijas art Thou,
 the revealer of all the Vedas, the sustainer
 of all worlds with Thy all-pervading Presence,
 O Mother !

All gunas and forms radiate from Thy Person,
 but Thou art quite beyond their reach ;
 Thou art aglow with the highest bliss
 of existence, O Mother !

The entire universe, animate and inanimate,
 thrilled with Thy touch, sings always
 the sweetness of Thy grace,
 O Mother !

Let us all unite, with one heart and soul,
to offer our greetings to Thy feet,

O Mother !

Glory and glory again and glory ever more
to Thee, O Mother !

MOTHER ANANDAMAYI

Mahamahopadhaya Gopinath Kaviraj M.A.

Late Principal, Government Sanskrit College,

BENARES.

1.

It was on a fine autumn morning in 1928 that I first came to know the name of Mother Anandamayi. I was getting ready to go to college,—I had not then retired,—when the late Mahamahopādhaya Pt. Padmanath Vidya-vinoda, M.A. came and met me in my house and informed me that Mother Anandamayi of Dacca had come to Benares. He presented me with a pamphlet written by the late Mr. Kunja Mohan Mukherji alias Swami Turiyananda on Mother and on the miraculous deliverance of his son from an impending snake-bite through Her grace. He said to me that the sight of Mother absorbed in Samadhi was really an ennobling one and he asked me to go and see Her, if possible. This commendation from the lips of a person who was known to be a

fastidious critic of men and things and who spared none from his attacks, seemed to me to carry special weight.

Mother was staying then in the house of Kunja Babu at Ramapura. I made up my mind to see Her there. Accordingly I went to Kunja Babu's place in the evening, where both Kunja Babu and his elder brother Sasanka Babu (the late Swami Akhandananda) very kindly undertook to help me in having Mother's 'darsana'. They introduced me to Bholanathji immediately and the latter took me to a small room on the ground floor where I found Mother absorbed in Samādhi surrounded by a number of bhaktas. Bholanathji was anxious to see Her come back to Her senses soon and made various unsuccessful attempts to that end. Knowing that a trance must be allowed to run its full natural course and that every artificial method of breaking it up was fraught with grave risks, I asked him to desist from doing anything calculated to interrupt it. I was waiting for Her return to normal consciousness, but noting that even in two or three hours Her condition did not come down to normal and, apprehending that it might take an indefinitely long time,

I returned home with the intention of coming and seeing Her next day.

It was on the 6th September that I paid my first visit to Mother. I came to learn that She had come a day or two earlier and also that this was the second time She had come to Benares. Her first visit having been in 1927 on Her way to Hardwar on the occasion of the Great Kumbha Fair.

I came back to Mother's place on the 7th as already arranged. In fact I came twice every day during Her short stay at Benares till the 12th September. I remember I did not miss a single day on this occasion. It is difficult to analyse after a lapse of over 17 years my first impressions of Mother and to explain in words what exactly I then felt. I can only say that what I actually saw with my own eyes far exceeded anything of a like nature I had ever seen before ;—it was a dream, as it were, realised in life. During the few days Mother was at Benares, Kunja Babu's house presented a spectacle of festive jubilation where an unending stream of visitors continued to flow in every day from before sunrise till after midnight. The doors of the house were kept open all the time

and everybody was always welcome. High officials, pandits, university students, shopkeepers, sadhus, sannyasis, priests, lay men and men in the street—all flocked in numbers, each in his own convenient hour, to have a glimpse of Her darsana, to pay their respect to Her and if possible, to exchange with Her a few words. People of both sexes, of all ages and of all ranks were to be found in the crowd. Some came to have Her darsana only, a few to have their doubts solved, while others still were there out of mere curiosity. The beauty of it was that all felt a sort of magnetic charm in Mother's personality, so that those who had come once out of curiosity could not resist the temptation of coming back again, no longer out of curiosity which had been satisfied but owing to some mysterious attraction. The fact is that all felt that they were like little children in the presence of their own mother. The bleakness of cold formalities was replaced by the warmth of familiarity and intimacy. Mother behaved with them as with Her own children—dear, affectionate and very familiar. There was not the least reserve in Her look nor any note of constraint in Her expression. The whole atmosphere was one

of a friendly gathering imbued with vivacity and joyousness.

Every evening a sort of informal meeting would be arranged in the courtyard where the visitors would be seated round Mother and ply Her with questions. She used to reply to each question resolving the doubts of the inquirers with a few short sentences in Her sweet and inimitable manner. As the enquirers hailed from different cultural levels and represented different intellectual and spiritual points of view, it is only natural that the questions should range over many different topics, and be of varying interest and value. It was wonderful how mother tackled all these questions with the same ease and spontaneity and without requiring a moment's reflection to deal with even the most abstruse and knotty problems brought before Her. Her replies were as a rule very pertinent, going straight to the heart of the questioner, couched in a language remarkable for its terseness and expressiveness. Every word that fell from Her lips carried weight; and humour too was not wanting when occasion demanded it. Mother as a conversationalist was seen at Her best in those days—it was a quality to which everybody

who has had the privilege of talking with Her in later years is in a position to testify. It was interesting to observe that She maintained an attitude of strict reticence in regard to questions which were not bonafide in nature but were either academical or intended to elicit opinions likely to hurt the feelings of others.

Different 'Kirtan' parties vied with each other in singing daily before Her the glories of the Divine and His Name. Individual devotees with a melodious voice considered it a distinct honour (to themselves) to be permitted to regale Her with their songs.

On such occasions generally, when the music flowed spontaneously out of the deeper feelings of the singer's heart, and also on other occasions when in the course of conversations a crucial point was reached it was observed that Mother's appearance became aglow with bhāva and the normal gave way to the supernormal. It seemed as if Her usual personality with which Her 'bhaktas' were familiar was replaced for a while by an altogether different one. At such moments various unusual phenomena were observed. 'Stotras' and 'mantras' of an extraordinary kind used to gush out of Her lips with a rapidity

which made it practically impossible for any one to record them.* The language of these utterances was unique ; it was not, strictly speaking, Sanskrit nor even any of its derivative vernaculars, though there were a few Sanskrit words here and there. Several words were unfamiliar and even the so-called Sanskrit words did not perhaps convey their usual sense. Besides, very often monosyllabic 'Bijas', known or unknown, were interspersed. The pronunciation was so perfect that even a conjunct sound, made up of

* In subsequent years attempts were sometimes made to record these spontaneous utterances, which were held to be as valuable as the Śrūtis revealed to the Risis. In the Matrdarsana (p. 46—52) some illustrations are to be found. The difficulty experienced in recording these was two-fold ; firstly, these were generally of a sudden emergence ; and there was no knowing when they would come. Even Mother Herself did not know. Secondly, it was really impossible to reproduce them exactly, except through some mechanical device. There was also the fear lest some letters might be missed or alteration or corruption made in their transcription as Her utterances deserved to be treated as Mantras, in which, besides other considerations, the constancy of the phonetic value of each sound had to be maintained. It is well known—

मन्त्रो ह्रीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा
मिथ्या प्रयुक्तौ न तमर्थमाह ।
स वागवक्ष्यो यजमानं हिनस्ति
यथेन्द्रशत्रुः स्वरतोऽपराधान् ॥

several consonants without any intervocalic linking, was distinctly audible. Sometimes on these occasions Mother melted into tears or ejaculations, or even would become rigid and pass into a trance-like condition.

The trance-like state was also induced in those days when 'bhaktas' offered flowers at Her feet or in other ways tried to propitiate Her. The response was immediate.

There was a difference of opinion at that time concerning the precise status of Mother. Some held that She was a Goddess in human form—Kali according to some, Durga according to others, Sarasvati or Radha according to others still. Some thought that She was a human aspirant, who had attained perfection in this life, after a series of births during which Her spiritual progress had been continued. Others again entertained the view that she was a Brahmayādinī as of yore or perhaps an Incarnation of the Divine come down to earth to relieve its sufferings. She was identified with Sukadeva by some and with Sri Krishna Himself by others. People of worldly nature used to think that some higher spiritual entity, human or celestial, was in possession of Her

body and utilised it as an instrument to serve its own ends. A certain gentleman then living in a house adjacent to my own and working in one of the local High schools, went to the length of telling me that Her case was clearly one of obsession, though by a good spirit and that it was desirable to bring back the soul from the control of the spirit. This gentleman, who was old and had the reputation of being a practical Tantrist of long standing, claimed to have the power of restoring Her to Her normal condition, provided that Her husband and father were agreeable. He was under the impression that the appointed course or evolution of Her life was being impeded in this way and that in the interest of Her own spiritual welfare this setback should be removed. It goes without saying that no-body cared to attach any importance to these words. One day, the great speaker, the late Swami Dayananda of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, came to see Mother and had a personal talk with Her. Though the interview of Swamiji was intended to be more or less of a private character, it was arranged that the late Sasanka Babu and myself would be allowed to be present on the occasion. Swamiji put several

questions to Mother which She readily answered.
Thus :—

Swamiji,—Mother, what are you in fact ? People hold different views regarding you and no agreement seems to exist. What have you to say of yourself ?

Mother,—You want to know what I am. Well, I am what you consider me to be—not more not less.

Swamiji,—What is the nature of your Samādhi ? Is it 'Savikalpa' or 'Nirvikalpa' ? Does mind then persist ?

Mother,—Well, it is for you to decide this question. All that I can say is that in the midst of all apparent changes of state in body and mind, I feel, I am aware, that I am always the same. I feel that in me there is no change of states. Call it by any name you like. Is it Samadhi ? Several such questions were put and answered.

These few days of Mother's stay at Benares sufficed to convince me of the greatness of Her personality and the unusual sanctity of Her life. I learnt Her past history from those around Her, including Bholanathji, Sister Gurupriya, Sasanka Babu and others, and I still remember

with delight those happy occasions when Mother Herself condescended to narrate the story of Her early life and its development at Bajitpur and Dacca. It was a story of gripping interest to us all.

This story which relates to Her earlier life at Astagram, Bajitpur and Dacca, much of which has since been recorded by Her admirers and devoted followers* and the story of Her later life throw a flood of light on Her unique personality.

The greatest thing that struck me most in those days in Her was Her personality. Her physical features were magnetic. Her smiling countenance, the sweetness of Her expression, the simplicity of Her life and behaviour, Her unassuming and genial manners, the cordiality and warmth of Her relationship with all, coupled with Her extraordinary holy life and wisdom, made Her an object of universal attraction and adoration.

* Sad Bani (Bengali) 1937 by (Bhaiji)
Do (English) 1937

Matrī Darsan (Bengali) 1938 by (Bhāiji)
Sri Sri Ma Anandamayī by Gurupriya Debi

Part I (1938) Part II (1938) "
Part III (1939) Part IV (1945) "

The last Part brings the story up to 1937.

Sri Sri Anandamayī Prasanga—by Amulya Kumar Dutt-Gupta. Part I (1938), Part II (1941).

2

During succeeding years I was privileged to come in closer touch with Her and to know Her more intimately. But it is not possible for me to state what Her exact role is or what particular rank is occupied by Her in the spiritual hierarchy of this country. That different persons should hold different opinions regarding Her personality is of course natural. For in a matter like this, a correct analysis on intellectual basis is not possible and an ordinary human judgment cannot yield any useful result.

Still however an attempt is being made here at the request of friends to discuss briefly some of the most prominent features of Her life and character. It is expected this discussion will not be taken as amounting to a final solution of the problem, for it offers no solution at all. It is intended rather to serve as a possible aid to a clearer appreciation of Her or as a suggestion in that direction. The basis of this discussion is furnished by the data in Her own utterances, whether embodied in books already published or awaiting publication, or otherwise.

Firstly, it is well known that Mother received no Diksa or initiation of any kind

from an external Guru and also that She Herself does not give Diksa to any body. In other words in the technical language of the Sastras She claims to be neither a Guru nor a Sisya.

But an informal Diksa, not one taken from an outside agency,—She certainly had. We know that this informal Diksa took place in the month of July or thereabout in the year 1922 when She was twenty-six years of age. Mother Herself admitted this fact shortly afterwards to one of Her cousins. This Diksa was not of the usual type known to us but it did represent the initiation of a certain spiritual activity within Her body, an activity which did not owe its origin to any source other than Her own self. In the conventional language of the world it may not be termed Diksa at all, but it is recognised as such in the traditional teachings of the mystical science. That a systematic course of Sadhana including physical and psychical disciplinary exercises, followed this event in Her life is well-known. In the Tantrik literature it has been made abundantly clear that Diksa is a spiritual necessity, though it is true that in every case external ceremonials or other forms of activity may not be needed. Inner Diksa consists in

an act of self-purification. The kind of Dikṣā is determined by the intensity of the Divine Power of Grace descending upon the soul. So far as the fundamental variety of this purificatory process is concerned, we have to recognise four ultimate types viz. Anupaya, Sambhavopaya, Saktopaya and Anavopaya. When the descending grace is extremely powerful the first type of Dikṣā follows as a natural sequence. With diminishing power the others are employed. In Anupaya Dikṣā perfection is realised at once. In Sambhavi Dikṣā or even in Sakti Dikṣā the necessity for external Kriyas as an aid to inner purification is not recognised.

In the history of mysticism it is recognised everywhere that in exceptional cases illumination is possible and this takes place even when an external source is lacking. We know of the Pratyekabuddha who neither received his wisdom from any previous Buddha nor communicated it to others. He was a Buddha no doubt, having attained to enlightenment, but he was neither a Sisya in relation to an earlier Buddha nor a Guru in relation to a future Bodhisattva or Buddha. Had he been a Guru he would have been a perfect Buddha (सम्यक्संबुद्ध).

The illumination in this case had its source within.

In the Vedic literature we come across cases of Risis who having been blessed with spontaneous illumination, were the seers of mantras which are associated with their names. This self-generated wisdom is really an example of the so-called Pratibha Jnana of which we read so much in the Patanjali and other Yoga systems and in the tantrik literature. The origin of Pratibha Jnana is explicable as the result of Divine Grace descending on the soul of a man.

The Grace or Sakti which comes down on the matured soul, is of different degrees of intensity. These degrees belong in the main to three categories—intense, mild and dull. Each of these three varieties is again subdivided into three classes, so that there are altogether nine degrees in all. If grace of the second degree counted from the beginning, descends on the soul, it is not required to have recourse to a Guru for illumination and one gets the Light from within. This Light is spontaneous and does not come from an external source. In such cases the necessity of an external Guru is dispensed with. But the Prarabdha Karma remains and the body

which is an outcome of this Karma persists till the Karma is worked out through Bhoga. When grace of the first degree descends the Prarabdha itself is destroyed. And with the exhaustion of Prarabdha the impure body also falls off. The question of an external Guru does not arise in this case, as in the case of the second degree of Grace.

In Sant literature we hear of Swayam Siddha Sants or persons who are saints from the very birth and not due to the accident of knowledge from an external source. These men take no Diksa from others, but they are in a position to give Diksa to deserving candidates. These great Souls descend from transcendent regions, specially from the Divine World, beyond the Cosmic Mind and the Great Void. And when embodied, their centres of consciousness never come down below the middle of the two eyebrows. In the literature of other countries also the record of similar cases is not altogether wanting.

I do not know if any of the above types of self-generated illumination is analogous to the nature of Mother's personality. It seems that Mother is not comparable to a Pratyekabuddha,

for, while a Pratyekabuddha is exclusive and isolated in his blissful seclusion, indifferent to the fact of Universal misery, Mother is too keenly sensitive to the sorrows of the world to remain contented with an isolated existence, even if it were possible. All Her thoughts and activities have their bearing on the amelioration and transformation of the world. And as a matter of fact She has always that Cosmic and Trans-cosmic Consciousness precluding any possible exclusiveness of outlook.

We know of cases of souls which are always perfect and which dwell permanently on the Divine Plane as eternal associates of the Divine Person to whom they are related as inalienable aspects of the integral whole. These souls are very similar in nature to the Svayam Siddha type mentioned above. As a matter of fact they are not subject to the action of ignorance or Time Spirit and are never required to come down to earth except in company with the Supreme Lord during His descent or at other times as directed by Him in regard to the time, place and manner of descent. Such souls considered from the standpoint of spiritual status and attitude are varied in nature. It

would be unfair to place Mother under this category, for the simple reason, that while these souls are characterised by a sense of intimacy with the Divine which seldom encroaches on identity, Mother represents an integral self-awareness which never tolerates even in the slightest degree an idea of separation or distinction from the integral Central Being. Her confession concerning Her consciousness of identity with the Cosmic and the Supercosmic existence and with all the powers and attributes associated with it, is a clear argument against the inclusion of Mother in this category.

The view which accepts Mother's personality as a case of Avatara may be dismissed with a few words of comment. The question of Ansa or Kala may be left aside, but it seems to me that even the possibility of a Plenary Avatara is excluded in Her case. The fact is that every Avatara, unless he is of the plenary type, represents an aspect of the Divine Power and can never represent the Divine Essence or even the Divine Person in toto. In several cases the Avatars are self forgetful Divine emanations whereas in others in which self-consciousness is retained, integral consciousness seems to be

always lacking. In case of the Plenary Avatara also, if there be any, unbroken consciousness of his plenary nature does not appear to exist. A careful study of Mother's utterances and a critical attitude towards Her life and activities would perhaps reveal the fact that Her case is altogether different. She herself has confessed to some that She never loses Her supreme self-consciousness. Samadhi or no Samadhi, She is where She always has been; She knows no change, no modification, no alteration; She is always poised in the self-same awareness as a supreme and integral universality, transcending all limitations of time, space and personality and yet comprehending them all in a great harmony.

She has said times without number that Her body is not like that of an ordinary person generated through Prarabdha Karma under the dominating influence of ignorance and that She has had no previous life to account for Her present existence; nor will She have a future life in continuation of and for the adjustment of Her activities in the present life. The fact that She was aware of Herself and conscious of what was happening around Her immediately after

Her birth is an illustration to show that Her self-awareness was born with Her and was not the effect of either Her so-called Diksa or Her so-called Sadhana in Bājītpur.

Mother says that all Her activities are really spontaneous and not prompted by will or purpose, nor influenced and coloured by desires. Will-power is not the spring of Her actions. The untrained will of the lay men and the trained will of the Yogi are equally absent in Her and what appears like the will is only an expression of the Great Power beyond the will working from within. She distinguishes between Mahasakti and Ichchasakti, saying that while the former is like the fire, the latter is like the smoke that issues out of it. Ichchasakti or Will-power cannot exist in a person who, whether considered as an individual or as the universal, is essentially impersonal. The power of the Impersonal or the power which is Impersonal expresses itself in the Cosmic Mind as the universal will and in the individual as the individual will, but in itself it can hardly be described as will of any kind. It is *Pure*, *Ineffable* and *Absolute*. Of course, there is such a thing as the Divine Will, but we have to interpret it as identical with the

Supreme Power rather than as will analogous to the human will though it must be admitted that the human will and the Divine Will are in a sense the same Power.

Will implies self-limitation to a certain extent even though that limitation is an imposition by itself on itself. What is technically known as Karma is really an outcome of the individual will of man with an egoistic background and functioning under ignorance. Freedom of will implies a removal of this limitation. If the limitation is self-made its disappearance is equally self-initiated. In the Self which is really free from all limitations, the will is absolutely free. In other words it is not will in the ordinary sense of the term but is an expression of the Divine Power, free and unobstructed in its functioning. That Mother has no will of Her own as distinguished from the so-called Divine Will shows that all Her movements take place spontaneously and that She does not hold Herself responsible for any of them. Her movements are guided neither by the predispositions of the past nor by any considerations of the future. They are confined to the present and they rest there as in the heart of Eternity.

From this it might be inferred that She is always in a state of purity and that what comes to pass in Her life is determined not by Herself as She appears to us but by the forces working from above. Her system is like a stringed instrument giving out notes, not of its own initiative but in response to shocks or vibrations received from outside.

It is very difficult for a man to conceive a Personality which is so impersonal or the Impersonal actually embodied in such a Person. In Mother we have a curious combination of these contradictory elements, for which reason, one finds it so hard to form an estimate of the truth of Her Being. Will-power being really absent, the absence of Karma as a moral force becomes intelligible. That Mother is untouched by Karma of any kind need not therefore be an enigma. There being no previous Karma the origin of Her body is to be explained by the play of the Supreme Power, either in itself or as reacting to the collective aspirations of humanity. As to why the Supreme Power should have expressed itself in a particular human body is a question to which an ordinary man is not in a position to reply.

The experience of Sarvatmabhava to which all mystics look forward to, after their realisation of self, is found to be a normal experience with Mother even in Her earliest days. The fact is so patent to all acquainted with Her life that no illustration is needed to substantiate it.

The true ideal of Samadhi which Mother has held out before Her admirers is intended to show that She does not attach undue importance to the Static Brahman realisation or to the Dynamic one. She places the Supreme Truth as consisting of and yet exceeding both these lower truths. The gradual evolution of the human soul in the direction of this Absolute Réality is represented by Her as an integral spiritual movement in which there are certain relative poises. Chitta Samadhana, Bhava Samadhana and Vyakta Samadhana are the three successive stages of inward development leading to its culmination in what is called by Her as Purna Samadhana. The first stage stands for the incipient condition of the evolutionary movement in which the mind is dried up and rendered light and combustible, owing to the elimination from it of the waters of wordly desires and

passions under the influence of inner culture in the form of meditation or otherwise. Just as dry fuel, free from all moisture, takes fire easily and burns, in the same way the mind thus purified catches easily the fire of knowledge and becomes aglow. This spiritual condition, usually known as Bhavasuddhi or purity of Bhava, is called Chittasamadhana. It arises under the influence of the Supreme Reality through different channels of expressions. Human nature being divergent, it is not strange that in some cases this state should represent an overpowering of the mental structure of the aspirant under the pressure of divine sentiment.

The second stage, called Bhava Samadhana, represents a more advanced condition than the first one. In this state the seeker remains immersed in the integral bhava, insensible to the stimuli of outer nature. The body becomes, as it were, paralysed under the domination of this bhava. Outwardly speaking, the body loses its mobility and power of responsiveness and becomes more or less like an inert clod, though inwardly the bhava which has influenced it, begins to flow on in an uninterrupted stream. When this state matures into perfection what

is left behind is only the play of the Integral Idea having unified the outer and inner elements of human nature. In this stage the individual being is charged and permeated with the integral bhava and there is an overflowing of it into outer nature. In other words, the integral bhava fills up the entire mind of the Sadhaka and flows over into the world outside him.

The third state is called Vyakta Samadhana. In this condition the fire of knowledge burns as fully within the individual as it does outside. The soul is then absorbed in one undivided Universal Being. Even in this state the duality of Form and Formless persists. But in the next stage which represents perfection and is called Purna Samadhana all sorts of dualities melt away, having been for ever transcended in the Supreme Unity of Absolute Truth. This state is Transcendent and yet Immanent, is Nirguna as well as Saguna, Sakara as well as Nirakara at one and the same time, and yet it transcends both. This is really the so-called Bhavatita condition free from the ripples of thought vibrations. This is Samadhi in the proper sense of the word, for it signifies Samadhana or completion of every sort of

activity and thought, a state beyond ignorance as well as beyond knowledge. The stability of the body and the mind is based upon concentration on a particular principle or vision which, in the end, universalises itself, dissolves the egoistic sense remnant within it and stands out in its unique splendour. In course of time, this sense of basic unity also disappears. What is left behind is beyond the power of mind to grasp or of words to describe. This appears to be the highest perfection of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Mother says that in this state all the activities of the body, even the vibrations of the cells, are stopped and that if the condition continues for a long time the body is likely to be destroyed. But one whose descent has for its object the welfare of the world continues in body as long as such continuance is necessary in the interest of humanity. This is a state of *Mahayoga* and is to be sharply distinguished from the *Yoga* of the ordinary class. While an ordinary Yogi retains his sense of physical identity to the last moment of his life and is subject to action, a Mahayogi is above such limitations and is immune from the necessity of any action initiated by himself.

It is evident from the above that the state of *Mahayoga* bears a faint resemblance to Mother's own condition, with this difference that while *Mahayoga* is the logical culmination of a series of prior Sadhanas, Mother's state, as such, was not evolved in that way. It has appeared with Her and will disappear with Her.

There is a tendency in some quarters to consider Mother as belonging to the category of a Devata. These people are inclined to think, each according to his own point of view, that She is not a normal human being but is celestial in origin. In reply to the contention of these persons it may be said that there is no specific ground to regard Her in this light. That different devotees saw in Her person different heavenly manifestations is easily explicable on the hypothesis of their unconscious predispositions crystallised into visions of the gods and goddesses associated with their subliminal mind and may also be interpreted as due to the action of the Supreme Power functioning as Will through Her body. That She Herself as an individual did not exercise any will-power is to be assumed on Her explicit disowning of the use of such a power. It is the intensity of Bhakti in a wor-

shipper which visualises its object in a concrete form. The function of the Supreme Power is of course assumed. We know of three layers of beings—one connected with the earth plane, the other with the intermediate plane and the third with the heavenly plane,—known respectively as Men, Siddhas, and Devas. Knowing Mother as one does at present, one cannot pretend to say that from the standpoint of Brahmanidya, the distinction of the three classes counts for much. The phenomena attributed to Mother are easily intelligible on the assumption of Her being endowed with Brahmanjana irrespective of the fact that She is Human or Siddha or Divya. As regards the question of Her descent as a Siddha or as a Devata it may be studied on the analogy of the problem of Her descent as a Nitya Siddha or Swayam Siddha mentioned above.

There is another point which needs elucidation in connection with the question of Mother's identity. We always find that inspite of apparently diverse attitudes or poises in Her mind and body, She always feels Herself as one and the same. This awareness of unity in the self is not affected in the least by Samadhi or Vyutthana nor even by the three normal states

of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Samadhi and its effects on the system are not minimised nor are we going to attach undue weight to Her playful outer movements. Underlying both the same self-vision persists, neither clouded by the many-sided activities relating to the outer world, nor clarified by the withdrawal of the senses and the mind inwards. In the midst of tumultuous uproar She maintains an unbroken silence and in the depth of Her silence She speaks out eloquently. This shows that in judging of Her we should not allow ourselves to be led by our considerations of Samadhi or Vyutthana. This being so, we cannot explain the whole story of Her Diksha, Sadhana and Upasana and even of Her illumination and attainment of Supreme Knowledge except as mere play, intended probably to serve as an example to ordinary humanity. One would thus find in Her a dual personality representing on the one hand the luminous peace of the Silent Self and on the other a self-imposed playful attitude displaying like a Kaleidoscope the shifting visions of a series of dramatic pictures bound together by certain bond of affinity or sequence, the secret of which is hidden from the view of ordinary men.

We know very well that in every stage of Her life Mother played Her part admirably well consistently with the laws of propriety befitting Her role, and yet behind all these appearances She retains the self-same and eternally self-revealed consciousness. It is therefore a very difficult task to try to describe Mother as She really is. She has appeared differently to different persons and even if these differences are contradictory we can quietly accept them knowing full well that in a higher synthesis even contradictories may meet together. These differences need not be obliterated in the interest of a particular view-point. Naturally we do not, and cannot, know all the phases of Mother's life; and that the little we know of a particular phase we know imperfectly. She is too near us to be seen in Her proper perspective and as for ourselves we too, shall have to rise up to the height and attain to broad out-look in which an attempt may be made to study Her properly. What is really needed is to feel that She is Mother and we are Her children and that as mere children we cannot be expected to know Her as She is but only as She shows Herself to us in response to our cravings. It really becomes us

to behave as infants crying out in the night and invoking Mother with an inarticulate language for Her actual descent and benediction.

3

ANANDAMAYI : A MYSTIC ROSE

Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar M.A. Ph.D.

I met Mother for the first time in 1929 at Dacca where I went in connection with the Indian Philosophical Congress. I made a point to see Her. I was advised to do so by an esteemed friend of mine who used to know Her intimately. I was told that Anandamayī was endowed with rare spiritual gifts. I am always eager to come in personal touch with men and women of spiritual gifts specially where the visions are genuine and are not tampered with borrowed intellectual ideas.

Anandamayī had little privilege of schooling; She is almost unlettered and did not, in Her youth, enjoy the fellowship of spiritual men and

women. As the mistress of an humble family She used to keep Herself engaged in Her household duties. She had no world outside Her own and near relative's house. She was an extremely simple village girl completely unsophisticated, far removed from the ways and manners of modern civilised life. This was my impression when I saw Her for the first time in a house at Ramna, Dacca. She was sitting alone in a fairly big room and I arrived there when the Sun had gone down the horizon. There was a light in the room and on enquiry about Her I was asked to go inside. I did so. The very sight gave me the impression of a soft human being, delicate, and fair like a flower. She was that day not very communicative but the very few words that were exchanged produced a visible effect. She became in-drawn and began to sink in Herself. She became completely silent but not less communicative; Her silence was most eloquent. Anandamayī was beautiful in Her appearance but as She went deeper into Herself She became more radiant and more expressive in Her mood of thought, and cast Her sweetness and silent grandeur in that atmosphere of quiet. Our first meeting ended in silence.

The news of our meeting was circulated in the congress by a scholar from Bombay. I was requested by the illustrious professors from Bombay, Poona, Madras and other parts of the country to take them to Mother. Next day all assembled in Her place ; the house was full. A professor of the Wilson College led the discussion and I was the interpreter. The discussion lasted for three hours and all kinds questions, mostly philosophical, were put; and Anandamayi was ready with answers spontaneously and immediately. There was no hesitation, not the least conscious thinking, nor the least sign of nervousness in Her. Her answers hit directly the point, free from the metaphysical technique. The whole assembly enjoyed Her keen intelligence, ready wit and eloquent expressions. The questioner was heard to say that during his travels in Europe and America he had not come across a lady so unlettered yet so wise. Towards the latter part of the discussion, Anandamayi was evidently withdrawn into Herself, and in a moment of inspiration uttered one or two Sanskrit sentences. It could not be caught and so it was not recorded. The whole assembly broke out in joyous wonder at the profundity

of Her wisdom, the fluency of Her expression and the luminosity of the smile in Her face.

Some years elapsed. I saw Mother again in Benares twice, and She gave me an almost identical impression, with this difference that I saw Her now more conscious and composed. The unconscious and the spontaneous in Her were withdrawn and She now had become the conscious teacher and interpreter of Her experience. She had become more intellectual. She no longer radiated like a silent flower moving at every waft of spiritual inspiration, now still, now breaking out in over-powering sweetness of cadence in vocal music. She has now become a keen logician, ready to cross words with the adepts in the art. The intellect in Her now had become more keen and could see and measure the foundations of Her experience and faith.

At times She soared into the sublime region of intellectual intuition and felt the total existence in its widest commonalty spread. She emphasised the undividedness of existence and realised the transcendent silence with intellectual calmness tinged with subdued emotional fervour. I once enjoyed a trip with

Her on the Ganges last April and heard eloquent description in a mood of exaltation about Her all-pervasiveness and Her immanence in everything. Herself being one with the core of existence, She does not always enjoy this height. She often identifies Herself with human miseries and sufferings and shows Her anxiety to carry their burden on Her shoulders. She is not now prone to lapse into Her silence, which is natural with Her, but is keen to take on Herself selfless service to inspire and guide and offer a soothing balm to suffering humanity. Now She feels Herself saturated with cosmic life, thought and bliss. She feels Herself in the cosmic beat of being now, and again She is far beyond in the inaccessible silence. Anandamayi once said, "Everybody's satisfaction is my satisfaction. Everybody's happiness is my own happiness. Everybody's misery is my misery". At other times She said, "There is no misery anywhere; because, I have no misery. The sun and moon are my forms; Agni (Fire) and Vayu (Air) are my powers." In another moment of inspiration She said, "I do not wait for your spiritual fitness. Like the flowing Ganges I go on bestowing my

compassion on all. This is my nature. This is my being."

Anandamayi does not exaggerate the sublime wisdom as to the oneness of being but she thinks that before the adept is consciously and permanently established there, he feels the expansiveness of being and he acquires powers. This is the natural fruition of so serious a search. The final fruition comes after the affirmation of expansive being through the graded scales of existence. The highest comes beyond the cosmic and supercosmic experiences in the beatitude of inexplicable silence.

Like the great compassionate 'Buddha, Anandamayi expresses Herself as carrying out Her existence for the redemption of humanity. My association with Her is not intimate enough to pass judgment upon this express declaration. This much I felt on more than one occasion that She had a kind heart and a chastened being which could evoke fine sentiments, which could carry thoughts into ethereal atmosphere and could produce waves of blissful aroma through the heart. Anandamayi always appeals to me as excelling in esoteric wisdom and an unfettered love. Love is Her being, sweetness is Her

expression. About Her esoteric wisdom it will be sufficient to say that according to Her own testimony many planes of existence are open to Her, and the master spirits from the higher planes contact Her. She seems to be under the influence and possession of Divine Mother; She is so much identified with Her that at times She could be seen assuming the Divine Form under the high stress of inspiration. Under the stress of the Divine power Her supple being gives way and becomes a vehicle of Divine expression.

Her chief instruction is to make unconditional surrender to the Divine through the heart. Surrender opens the inner being, makes it aspiring and fit for receiving; finally it identifies the aspiring soul with the Divine in the inmost cavity of the heart. Everything then becomes easy; for the undulations of our being are then removed, and it stands unmasked in Divine light and splendour. Once the being has the touch of the Divine, the impressions become deepened with the habitual upward bent of the being. A great force comes down purifying and shaping the being and making it fit for greater consummation, viz, revelation of the profound

wisdom, undimmed light and sure power. Anandamayi's frail being stands illumined with a rare light elevated with a rare vision. She has become veritably a Spiritual Rose emitting an uncommon sweetness, a rare delicacy and fine waves of bliss. I have seen Her photograph, taken immediately after awaking from ecstasy. It indicated the impress of heavenly charm upon Her face. It is like a spiritual twilight, half-conscious and half-unconscious of the receding light, a play of heavenly light and shade. She was then like a Lotus, listless in the Sun's light, enveloped by the darkness of the dusk.

MA ANANDAMAYI : a New Power on this Earth

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There is now a chaos in the affairs of the world. Man faces a cataclysmic crisis. The foundations of human civilization are crumbling, threatening the entire culture and the very existence of man. Never was the need for spiritual revival so urgent, the search for a life of truth and non-violence so desperate as now. The soul of man struggling helplessly within the coils of his selfmade prison, craves most eagerly for light and deliverance. In this oppressive atmosphere of the world, laden with bitter feud and misery, Mother Anandamayi stands as a beacon-light to struggling humanity, holding out a message of hope and cheer, of eternal bliss and peace.

Before Mother Anandamayi our mind and intelligence retire baffled and overwhelmed. In Her presence we feel, like one standing at the foot of the mighty Himalayas with higher and higher peaks spreading out in endless panorama

before our vision in their bewildering beauty and variety. Like the Himalayas, too, Mother Anandamayī sends down from Her great heights endless streams of love and purity that sustain and uplift a countless number of people on this Earth.

Mother is Herself the embodiment here below of the supreme *Matri Sakti*. In Her presence the young, the adult and the old, all feel the warmth of a mother's love and affection, deep and boundless. There is the same loving kindness for all. No body feels slighted. On the contrary, every one feels blessed, receiving Her grace, according to his capacity and needs. The saintly people find in Her words a glow of divine wisdom, while the worldly and the sinful feel an inner awakening for a higher life. In Her company an urge to live a better life becomes insistent. A new enthusiasm seizes us and pulls us up from the dull routine of the transitory pleasures of our physical existence. One is struck with amazement when one finds Mother sitting for almost the whole day, calm, serene and even smiling amongst streams of men and women, boys and girls, amongst the old and the decrepit and the sick, all eager

to catch Her glance, waiting for hours together in a mood of devotion and expectancy. The mysterious influence that radiates from Her person can neither be explained by reason nor traced to any palpable source. But it is still there. We can feel it in our hearts. It is a rapture to listen to the easy flow of Her soft, soothing words which, like the invisible rays of light, heal our hidden sores and brighten up the darkest corners of our hearts.

Like the rays of the Sun too, Her divine motherly love for the fallen, for the distressed and for the bereaved, descends always silently everywhere, down to the inmost depths of one's being, and transforms one anew, curing all the mental maladies that eat away one's vitals. With a mysterious divine presence She permeates every fibre of Her children's heart. There is no material, moral or spiritual rod nor any national or international scale that we know of, to measure Her greatness and grandeur, Her sweetness and solemnity and Her love and compassion for all created beings (भूतानुकम्पा) from the tiniest fly to the noblest of saints.

We hear of many Incarnations of God in the persons of prophets and seers sent down by the

Divine Sakti for the regeneration of the world ; but Mother Anandamayi appears to be a unique phenomenon in the history of man. In Her the intensely human and the essentially divine meet in perfect harmony. She has a radiant personality and serene selfassurance, the like of which cannot be found elsewhere. The beauty, joy and lustre which Her presence sheds all around are supremely Divine. We get the impression that only a fraction of Her self deals with the human affairs while an immense reserve of power is held up in the background. She lives and moves about amongst all types and classes of men. Wherever She goes She brings an illumination in the minds and hearts of men where no earthly light can penetrate. A merciful shower of bliss floods our parched-up souls when we happen to meet Her whether in a vast concourse, or in a Railway Station or in an Asram. She does not go into the house of any private individual ; a temple or an Asram or a Dharmasala is always a welcome place for Her temporary residence.

"This body belongs to you all. Do God's work according to what you think best"—was the message which She once transmitted to Her

children. She stands aloof and above all controversies and sectarianism with unruffled dignity and serenity as a symbol of unity, mutual love and trustfulness, all persons finding a common meeting ground in and through Her. The above message signifies an absolute dedication of Her all for the good of humanity. She does not talk about politics or of any particular religion or social code. Her conversation directly bears on God, the primal source of all unity and power, love and devotion, sacrifice and selfless service, tolerance and goodwill for all created beings.

She advises that every man or woman, boy or girl should set up a relationship or link with the Creator by devoting five or ten minutes at a specified time everyday, for the meditation of God ; and no worldly thoughts whatsoever must be allowed to creep in during that short interval. This short period is to be dedicated for life to God and spent in making the mind absolutely void for the play of the Divine forces, so that the individual soul may be pulled up and find an outlet to plunge into the Infinite.

• Generally in her Ashrams, silence is observed for an hour or more, when there descends a

heavenly spell of peace and tranquillity too deep for expression. One feels as if one's self has become merged in, in that ecstatic calm. An atmosphere of mystic expansiveness then widens the horizon of our mind ; we come to feel the littleness and worthlessness of our daily squabbles and aimless pursuits. She symbolises, at that time, oneness of all beings with the Supreme Mother, all the tiniest sparks of our life merging together for the time being, into one holy flame of Mother's body.

Whenever She talks, She pours out a flood of sweetness upon all persons present. In Her easy, penetrating but joyful way She explains, elaborates and discusses the highest problems of philosophy in such a simple and homely manner that it carries conviction to the learned as well as to the ordinary men and women. Her mode of approach is direct, charming ; an inner glow accompanies all Her words which imparts to them wonderful force and vitality. The varied problems of everyday life as well as the subtle ones of the spiritual plane are all one to Her. With a few plain words or simple suggestions She solves them to every body's entire satisfaction.

All Her activities are ever directed to the uplift of the human soul whose clouded vision is responsible for all the disasters of society. She enables all persons to pass through the trials and tribulations of worldly life with strength and determination, as well as through all the difficult, intricate paths of spiritual progress or Sadhana. Sometimes Her silence becomes more eloquent and effective than Her words.

Those of us that have had the good fortune to come under the influence of Her magnetic personality have always felt that She is like "a star that dwells apart" from all the transitory toils and turmoils of earthly existence ; yet She, with Her natural composure and prophetic vision points out clearly the course of action one should follow in life and impresses upon every body the importance of the real good of all men,—the realisation of the divine Atman. All that She does, says and suggests converge upon the one focal point of all lives, admirably expressed in the Sruti—*

यस्यानुवित्तः प्रतिबुद्ध आत्माऽस्मिन् संदेहो गहने प्रविष्टः ।

स विश्वकृत् स हि सर्वस्य कृत्ता तस्य लोकाः स उ लोक एव ॥ *

"He who has realised the Atman and has had a direct vision of the same, within the coils of his perishable body wherein its glory is shrouded by Maya, develops the power to recreate the world anew ; he alone becomes the lord of all ; all beings appearing like his own selves, he himself becoming the soul of all."

All that Mother does from dawn to dusk, from dusk to dawn, proclaims the beauty and the blissfulness of this highest state of existence as has been better described in the Sruti :—

एषः ब्रह्मलोक एषोऽस्य परमा गतिरेषास्य परमा सम्पदेषोऽस्य
परमो लोक एषोऽस्य परम आनन्द एतस्यैवानन्दस्यान्यानि

भूतानि मातामुपजीवन्ति ॥ *

"It is the state of the Brahman, the final goal of Jiva, his crowning glory, his surest place of repose, the state of his supreme beatitude (परम आनन्दः) of which the joys of the world are but the minutest drops ; with these, ordinary mortals enjoy all the short-lived happiness of the brief cycle of their lives on this planet."

Mother is infinitely greater than all the infinite powers and glories which we find revealed in Her before our eyes. She represents the Eternal Mother-power (मातृशक्तिः) playing with the manifested universe with but a fragment of Her limitless potentialities, whereas She

* व. आ. ४.३.३२

Herself pervades, enlivens and illuminates the eternal mystic regions of the Great Beyond, out of which myriads of worlds emerge into our vision, and in which they move about and into which they finally get dissolved. What has been said about the Supreme Father,—

एतावानस्य महिमातो ज्यायांश्च पूरुषः

पादोऽस्य विश्वाभूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥ *

can be applied to Her with equal exactitude. We find Her performing all the functions of an ordinary mortal in the most perfect manner and yet supremely detached from them all, like a drop of water on the lotus leaf; but on occasions, we find glimpses of Her divinity in Her words, looks, actions and manners. Her ways always evoke admiration and devotion to Her Self. There are many phenomena associated with Her which may be called miracles on account of their mystic and supernatural character.

A few instances may be of interest. On the 3rd of August 1944, the writer went to see Mother at Nawadwip on receiving news that She was very unwell. : It was the day preceding

the Jhulan Purnima. Mother was staying on the first floor of the premises, attached to Govindaji's temple. When the writer entered the room with two ladies with him, it was about 11 P.M. There was one electric light on. On entering the room, they found Mother seated smiling, beaming with joy. Her whole Body shone like a ball of dazzling light, making the electric bulb look almost pale and red. Such wonderful radiance from a human figure was beyond all our conception. Her body shone with such an intensely soothing light that the whole room appeared to be filled with some divine, ethereal presence.

Subsequently when Mother was asked what made Her body look so bright that night, in spite of Her serious physical illness, She softly said with Her characteristic sweet smile,—“Didn't you find how the many gods and goddesses in the Temples of Nawadwip were all nicely dressed up and illuminated for the Jhulan Purnima celebrations? Don't you think it proper that this Body, too, should put forth some lustre and grace?”

Next morning we all sat before Mother. Prasad from Govindaji's temple was being

distributed. A lady with a baby in her arms, came to see Mother who sat talking to the many men and women assembled there. On entering, the lady asked "Who is the Mother here?" One of us pointed Her out! The following conversation ensued :—

L. People say you are Mother. Where are your sons and daughters ?

M. "Here", said Mother pointing to Her breast.

L. Where is your husband ?

M. "Here", with the same gesture.

L. Where are your parents ?

M. (With a smile) "Here within this heart."

L. Your home ?

M. (With the same gesture) "Here."

The lady who was putting these questions looked completely puzzled, failing to comprehend what Mother said. Mother noticed it and in Her usual soothing, convincing manner said,— "Here in this body lie all things in the universe, —father, mother, husband, son and daughter, —all created beings. From this One, all have come into being. In One all exist, all persist and merge finally".

From the above little episode it will be manifest that Mother symbolises the universal Matri-Sakti with which the Paramatma works ; about whom the Risis of old said—

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।

त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विखतोमुखः ।***

अनादिमत्त्वं विभुत्वेन वर्त्तसे यतो जातानि भुवनानि विश्वा ॥*

“Thou art all in one ; man or woman, boy or maiden or a decrepit old fellow moving with a crutch with faltering steps. Thou dost, under Maya, appear like one born in this world, assuming endless forms. Thou art without a beginning and dost pervade the universe. From Thee all the worlds have sprung into existence.”

Mother stands on a plane far higher and more intangible than the physical, far deeper and more subtle than the mental, with a heart overflowing with love for all beings and ever working in inscrutable ways for ultimate human good. In Her presence an atmosphere of purity and joy, of aspiration for higher life and of an upsurge of man's nobler and higher sentiments prevails. Her whispers are far more powerful than the sharp whips of a kingly power, to reclaim a lost soul. Her silent inspirations impel us to strive for a nobler and a happier life. The

* श्र. उ. ४।३।३-४

elusiveness of the chase heightens our ardour until the search becomes a part of our life and religion.

When Mother sings a song whether in Bengali, Hindi or Sanskrit, the sweetness and the solemn purity of the melody, the depth of feeling and the world of suggestion called up,—all these combine to affect the hearers in a strange and profound manner so that it often remains an unforgettable memory in the mind. She always insists on devotional songs of the Kirtan type being sung, in which, as She says, the heart of living beings, the souls of departed saints and the invisible powers of the air, all join.

Divinity according to Her is the salt and essence of life. To realise it in order to improve the fullness and quality of our life, we must fill our hearts with noble Truths and Love and Faith. The only Faith that ennobles and transforms our being must grow from our sincere love and devotion to Mother and Her Message. We should remember—

- श्रद्धया देवो देवत्वमश्नुते श्रद्धा प्रतिष्ठा लोकस्य देवी ।
- कामवत्सा अमृतं दुहाता श्रद्धा देवी प्रथमजा ऋतस्य ॥*

* तैत्तिरीय ब्राह्मण २।८।८।७

To understand Her ways, to obtain Her blessings, to work out our own destiny, the first and the foremost requisite is Sraddha, the first offspring of truth, that enables gods to taste the fruits of immortality, that lays the foundation of this universe; from Sraddha flow all the highest, purest and noblest treasures of life.

5

MOTHER ANANDAMAYI

A Great Mystic of the Modern World.

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Mother Anandamayī ranks high amongst the great mystics of the world. Her life and personality are in themselves the most effective refutation of the unbeliever and the agnostic. Even some of the most sceptical of modern youths who have gone to Her and sat by Her side for some time, have admitted that they have caught a glimpse, however fleeting, of a different and a higher state of being, a serenity and a joy which cannot be accounted for by

ordinary explanations. This direct and immediate experience of a higher consciousness is of immense value to the earnest seeker of truth. The mystic shows to the world that there is something beyond and behind the appearances and that the existence of the noumenal universe is no mere inference of the halting, discursive, hesitating understanding; but is the direct revelation of the intuitive, unerring reason. His language carries conviction because it springs from the innermost regions of his heart and goes straight into the heart of the listener and strikes there the sympathetic strings with a peculiar liveliness and vivacity. The manner and method in which he speaks, show unmistakably that the language is of one who has experienced Ultimate Reality, of one who has realised it as immediately, vividly and as clearly as the sense-organs apprehend the world of physical objects. In saying that the mystic's experience of ultimate Reality is as clear and vivid as sense-experience, it should be noted that we are only making use of an easily understood comparison, but that it falls far short of the truth. Because we ordinarily do not know anything clearer and more distinct

than sense-experience, we say that the mystic's experience is as clear as the deliverances of sense. What is meant, however, is that the mystic's experience is *at least* as clear as sense-experience. In fact, the clearness that belongs to the higher intuitive experience cannot at all be compared with the clearness that attaches to sense-experience; one is infinitely removed from the other. Spinoza draws the distinction between adventitious ideas and intuitive ideas and shows how the former fall short of the latter. The deeper we dive into the stream of consciousness, the nearer we approach the unruffled, calm, transparent serenity of the soul. As by the mystic is meant one who has dived very deep into the mysterious innermost current of consciousness, it follows that his experience must possess a transparency and clearness, a vividness and vivacity that is unique and as such, cannot but carry conviction and appear to be self-evident.

The inner criterion which distinguishes between a higher and a lower value is the strength with which it draws us to the Absolute, signifying as it does the Highest Value. If the Absolute is the Highest that we can think of,

or aspire after, the Highest that can be realised, if the Absolute stands for the ideal of knowing, feeling and willing, i.e., for Truth, Beauty and Goodness, it follows that whatever attracts us to the Absolute must be of higher value than what repels us from it. When the Ideal Values become luminous and alluring to us, when the longing for them that is inherent in us, attains great intensity, we feel uplifted and raised to a higher consciousness, as if we are being drawn to a new realm where the categories of Space, Time and Causality are not the standards of measurement, where other values than those recognised in the phenomenal universe obtain. In the presence of saints and sages, possessing the higher consciousness abundantly, one feels this process of uplifting, this actual transference to another level which proclaims its higher status directly. No argument, no evidence is needed to prove that the new consciousness is of deeper value than what we are ordinarily acquainted with ; the calm serenity, the revealing silence, the transparent harmony, all bear immediate testimony to its superiority. The good, the virtuous or the higher life seems to be no less contagious than the evil, the vicious and

the lower life. The higher consciousness that constantly floods the mind of the mystic exerts a powerful attraction on all persons around him and quietly lifts them above the ordinary plane and makes them taste of that divine sweetness which the mystic himself enjoys without cessation. This characteristic, viz., the power of lifting people to a higher plane of consciousness marks out the saint and the mystic prominently. This is particularly true of Mother Anandamayi. I have heard from all my friends and acquaintances, who had the good fortune of sitting at the feet of Mother that they have all felt an elevation, a lifting up into 'a supremely calm and serene atmosphere and that they have learnt and gained more from the silence of Mother than from the eloquent discussions of learned men elsewhere. When I had her 'darsan' for the first time in December, 1924, at the Sahbag garden in Dacca, this is what struck me and I realised that She spoke more through Her sublime silence than could be expressed through words.

The Absolute is not only homogeneous unity (*eka-rasa*) but is also the Highest Synthesis, the most Perfect Harmony, looked at from below. All contradictions are reconciled in the Absolute

and all oppositions are found to be only seeming and superficial which do not disturb or even touch the Unity and Harmony of the Absolute. There is nothing that can form the antithesis to the Absolute. In the Absolute we reach the stage of the highest reconciliation (*avirodha*), the perfect synthesis and harmony (*Nirdosham Samam*)* the supreme and sublime Experience that is never contradicted or Sublated (*abadhita*) and to which nothing appears as an other and which finds itself in everything. It follows, therefore, that one who has reached the Absolute must have realised this synthesis and harmony in experience and can no longer hold any sectarian view. The partisan spirit cannot but die in such a person for ever and he must proclaim from the housetop that all roads lead to Rome. He has reached the primal source, the central store of all energy and has seen the point whereto all the diverse lines converge. He has realised that the divergence and the opposition only exist in the outermost regions, in the periphery and the extremities, and that as there is gradual approach towards the centre, there are many junction-points on the way

* Gita 5. 19.

where some of the divergent lines meet ; and that when the goal is reached, there is no longer any opposition, any thesis or antithesis, any divergence or difference, but that all opposition and dualism, divergence and difference, become resolved in a Supreme Synthesis, a Happy Harmony and a Sublime Transcendence. In Mother Anandamayi, one notices this absence of any partisan spirit in a marked degree and is very often surprised to find how ably She can reconcile the various contending parties to their entire satisfaction.

Mother Anandamayi is practically an unlettered woman. I have seen some lines written by Her where She writes in bold letters like a simple village woman, even making ordinary spelling mistakes. But when She is engaged in any philosophical or religious discussion, it is difficult to believe that She has had virtually no education and training in Her life. The clear grasp of the subject-matter, the perfectly logical and systematic exposition, the methodical advance in the argument, the uncommon assimilation and thorough understanding of even the most abstruse philosophical problems,—all show a culture of a very high order. Most of the

members and delegates of the Indian Philosophical Congress in its Dacca Session went to have a 'darsan' of Mother and put all sorts of questions to Her. They were all amazed to find how brilliantly and relevantly, and also how joyously all their questions were answered by Mother. Even the most sceptical mind cannot but admit that Mother has a realisation (*anubhava*) of Ultimate Reality where all the divergent lines meet and where the highest centres are working. There are special centres corresponding to the working of the different faculties of knowing, feeling and willing, and when the different faculties work separately and divergently, only the lower centres function. But when it is found that all the faculties work together and that an almost unlettered Woman with hardly any training is engaging Herself in intellectual discussions of a very high order and putting forward methodical solutions of intricate and puzzling problems, there cannot remain any doubt that here is an instance of the working of the highest centre or centres, where all the lower centres have converged; and correspondingly, of the stage of the highest synthesis which reconciles all opposition and divergence.

Anandamayi is a very appropriate name by which She is widely known. The face of Mother is always lit up with a sweet smile that is peculiarly charming, and even the most insensitive mind can perceive that the unending joy and bliss that is inside is literally overflowing outward. One who has seen Mother even once, cannot doubt that there is such a thing as Perfect Bliss or Ananda. One really feels in Her presence something like an unmixed joy, which is pure and unique, a higher and nobler happiness than the transitory pleasures of the sensory plane. Her illuminating discourses show unmistakably the presence of a '*jnana*', a realisation or an '*anubhava*' that is not due to the training of the intellect, and which is above the piecemeal working of the faculties. Her strong personality, Her indomitable will in a frail bodily frame, Her deep devotion to truth, Her independence, Her care-free ease and spontaneity, —all show beyond doubt the realisation of the Ultimate Reality that is perfect freedom (*abhaya*) and perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that She "always lives in *Satchidananda* consciousness."

6

SRI ANANDĀMYI MATA

BY

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How do we know the reality of spiritual life ? By living the life that is needed for it, by direct personal experience, and on the undeniable evidence of people who, in the past as well as in the living present, have actually experienced it. The direct experience which comes after long waiting, inner struggle and moral culture, has to be preceded by the testimony of seers gifted with divine vision. We have to watch their life closely and keep in intimate touch with them to realise the marked difference between their lives and ours ; and it will not be long before we discover to our surprise and satisfaction that their inward serenity is never ruffled, their balance of mind never disturbed, that they are compassionate to a degree, utterly unselfish, ever ready to serve their fellow-men without any distinction whatsoever. They are neither repelled by the

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repellent nor are they attracted by what is attractive ; they generally sit loose on the objects of the senses ; they are will-ruled, their passion-nature is calmed and they are deeply peaceful.

Such a life as theirs is enough to inspire us with well-reasoned faith in the reality of a life higher than our own. This faith is based not on mere hearsay, nor is it dogmatically imposed upon us by some time-worn tradition and awe-inspiring authority, but on the searching testimony of our critical, analytic and discriminative mind that has trained itself to weigh evidences and to test the value of a theoretical knowledge by its application to every day life. Thus when we learn what has been written about the qualifications of spiritually developed persons, we test its truth by dispassionately and fairly examining the life of such persons as are reputed to be spiritual or lay claim to any kind of higher life.

The writer had fairly good opportunity of coming in contact with many Yogis, Sannyasis and Muslim Sufis and Mystics. He writes with a certain amount of personal knowledge. In more than half the cases he noticed with no

little mortification that they were sadly lacking even in ordinary moral virtues which are rightly believed to be essential conditions for any advance in spiritual life. Some of them had not subdued their desire-nature, nor sufficiently controlled their mind ; whereas others acted quite contrary to their professions. Side by side with such persons who were wanting in some moral quality or other, he had the inestimable privilege and good fortune to come in close touch with a few of those who were distinctly head and shoulders above the common run of humanity. Their moral acquisitions were of a secure and exalted kind. ° They were unmoved by joys and sorrows, gain and loss, honour and dishonour. In a word, they completely fulfilled all the conditions necessary for spiritual life as laid down in the sacred scriptures of every religion. Their actions and professions never contradicted each other. It was from contact with such men as lived up to the highest ideal that the reality of a truly spiritual life dawned on the mind of the writer of these lines. Teachings in books like the Koran, the Bible, the Bhagawad Gita, Upanisads and Light on the Path, which he thought at one time to be visionary and impracticable,

utterly incapable of being translated into action, were seen to have been thoroughly assimilated and lived in their every day life. Truly speaking, they are the experts in the Science of Life and they should be trusted as much, if not more, as one trusts an expert in the realm of the physical sciences. One such highly illumined sage is Srimati Anandamayi Mata. to come in contact with whom is to have abundant proof of the reality of spiritual life.

She is virtually an unlettered person who can hardly read and write. This lack, however, has by no means stood in the way of Her spiritual greatness. Those who had the privilege of having known Her early days bear testimony to Her extra-ordinary spiritual powers when She was merely a girl. This may be due to Her spiritual attainments in Her past life which She brought into Her present life.* Peace and serenity, detachment and *vairagya* (renunciation) are visible on Her care-free face. Her mind is never ruffled and Her mood is ever equable. On no occasion and in no circumstances does She betray any sign of a disturbed mind or ruffled

* Mother has been often heard to say that She had no previous births.

emotion. Blissful happiness is always visible in Her countenance. The moment one enters Her presence one feels truly inspired, consoled and elevated.

Her simple unsophisticated words touch our hearts. If any one puts questions to Her on any vital topics concerning spiritual life and its values, She gives such a clear and convincing answer that every one present feels satisfied and comforted.

In these days we apply the principle of utility to everything and judge the worth and value of a person from the services he renders to his fellow-men. If we judge Her from this standpoint we are driven to acknowledge that She has been rendering great services in Her own way to humanity at large. We all know that the crying need of humanity and more especially of our country, has always been for the right type of men and women endowed with unshakable will, determined mind, pure and unselfish life and clean heart. Unfortunately our country is sadly lacking in facilities for training people to develop such sterling qualities of character. It is only when we come in contact with spiritually developed souls like Sri Ananda

Mayi that we realise how even persons of low mentality and vicious habits may be elevated and transformed by their contact with Her. I know several persons whose lives have been thus completely changed for the better by their association with Mother. This is no small service that She has been rendering to the cause of humanity. Thus She has been holding aloft the bright torch of spiritual light in these dark days.

7

SOME RECOLLECTIONS

Arun Prakash Banerjee.

1

It was Easter 1942. I had gone to meet Mother in the Kishenpur Asram on the Dehradun-Mussoorie Road. This was my first visit to Mother after I had met Her at Lucknow a few months ago. On reaching Dehradun I came to know that some devotees were expected to come from Delhi for their annual *kirtan* in Mother's presence. It was to take place on

Easter Sunday from sunrise to sunset. On the previous evening all arrangements were completed. Some of the Dehradun devotees wanted to give a feast (Bhandara) on the occasion and sought Mother's permission. Mother asked: "How many people are you going to provide for?" One said, 'Two hundred'. Mother remained silent. Another said, 'Mother, if you permit we can make arrangements for, say, three hundred'. Still Mother said nothing. A third said, 'Mother, without your permission nothing can be done'. Mother looked up and said "Allright, let it be hoped that your wishes will be fulfilled."

The market was about five miles from the Asram. Provisions had to be purchased the evening before. The *bhaktas* were busy.

Next morning, the *kirtan* started with due rites and solemnity. The hall and the verandahs were all packed, the crowd even over-flowed into the garden. Besides listening to the *kirtan*, everybody wanted to have *darsan* (glimpse) of the Mother. The beggars and even the sweepers of the locality had turned up, even the passers-by on their way to Mussoorie, and other curious sight-seers seeing a crowd flocked into the Asram.

At about noon, Mother withdrew from the hall and retired to Her small room upstairs. Then She summoned those who were arranging the feast and asked if they were ready. One of them frankly said, 'Mother, our arrangements are complete, but we had only about four hundred people in view. Now we find that more than five hundred are to be fed.' Another, "Mother, the market is far off, otherwise something could be done.' A third pleaded, 'If we put off the meal till a little later we might manage'. Mother could no longer remain silent. She said, "It is already noon ; are they not hungry ?" Then She became silent. But soon afterwards said, "No, they are to be fed and fed immediately." Again she stopped for a moment but this time spoke out in a clear voice, "Make arrangements for serving them. The meal should be over within an hour and a half. Not one should go unfed. Leave this body alone. Report only if there is any shortage. Otherwise do not come to me." I was present there. We all felt uncomfortable. But Mother said with perfect ease,—“Go, do as has been said. Do not forget, not one should go unfed. Don't be unhappy.” God's service must be done with a cheerful heart.”

I was perplexed. I was only an onlooker and could not help in any way. I made up my mind to avoid the meal knowing the situation. I no longer felt hungry. But after a few minutes I found Gurupriya Devi (sister) coming to me in haste, saying 'Dada (brother), come soon. Have you heard Mother's command? Everything must be over in one hour and a half. Won't you help by joining us without delay?' I cast my thoughts aside. Mother had offered the boon of this meal and as Her child I must enjoy it.

I took my seat with the crowd and began to eat the delicious things provided. Everyone was happy. Those who served seemed quite free of anxiety. I ate almost double the usual quantity. The meal proceeded in the midst of a good deal of happy laughter and merriment with occasional shouts of Jai (glory) to Mother.

After the meal I went upstairs, but did not want Mother to discover me. I stood behind the door of Her room, then with a happy heart prostrated, whispering to myself: "Mother, bless me that I may be worthy of a meal like this, which brings your grace."

Those in charge of the feast were coming up

to report to Mother : the hour and a half was over. They opened the door and I found Mother sitting in Her usual tranquil mood. She smiled and asked "What news?" The devotees cheerfully replied, "Mother, everyone has been fed sumptuously. We never had so much pleasure in serving food." Mother asked, "What about your provisions?" One of them burst out, 'Mother, more than five hundred people had been fed and yet there is enough left to feed two hundred more.' Mother said gravely, "That is very good. Not a particle should be wasted. Let those who come or are staying here be fed again in the evening. Everything must be consumed to-day. If it cannot be eaten here, let it be given to those outside who are hungry."

We all left Her for an hour or so for rest. Our minds were busy with the laws of Arithmetic : how could provision for four hundred people feed more than five hundred and yet have enough left for two hundred persons more ? It was very baffling.

2.

Shall I relate another occurrence of the same afternoon, when five *sadhus* arrived

from Hardwar. There at a religious meeting, acute controversy had arisen between them, for they were of different schools, over some passage of the scriptures. It was about to end in bitterness, when some gentleman implored them to accept arbitration. It was somewhat difficult to find out a suitable arbiter, who would be acceptable for purposes of settling disputed points of the *Sastras* (scriptures), particularly to *sadhus* belonging to different sects. At last they suddenly thought of referring to Mother Anandamayi. So they had come to Her. They entered the Asram scowling and full of gloom. When they were taken upstairs to Mother's room, I followed them. Briefly told of the situation, Mother smiled and entreated them to be seated in their daughter's room. Then She asked for fruits and sweets to be brought for their refreshment, but they refused to eat. Mother insisted and said, "When you have come to your daughter, you will have to pay heed to Her wishes." This was not a mere request but a command of love. These *sadhus* refused no longer. Then they asked to be let alone with Mother. After an hour the door was opened, they came out full of smiles almost

embracing each other. And Mother's laughter filled the room. I could not help wondering how Mother, quite untutored in the *Sastras* could have settled the dispute.

3

In 1942 Mother spent part of the summer at Bhim Tal and I was privileged to stay with Her. Mother was repeatedly asked to visit some ardent devotees in the neighbourhood. She was to return in three or four days, but She actually stayed away for eight or ten days. Four or five of us remained at Bhim Tal. The weather suddenly changed; there were showers and it grew cold. With Mother away, there was no warmth left in our hearts. My old trouble, asthma, re-appeared. I had great difficulty in breathing during the night.

Incessant coughing forced me to sit up. I thought of Mother. When would She come? Just before starting She had told me "Baba (son), stay like a good boy." I had not been a good boy, so I was visited with this malady. How long could I wait without treatment?

I wanted to go to a Doctor at Lucknow, of course with Mother's permission. But She did not return.

At last She came one evening at dusk. One who had accompanied Her came running to my room and said, 'Dada (brother), how are you? Mother was very anxious to return on your account. For the last few days She had repeatedly said that you were not well. Are you not well? Mother has come. You will soon be all right.'

I was no doubt relieved by Her return but did not show satisfaction. I was inwardly displeased and unhappy. When She knew of my illness, why did She not come earlier?

The person who had reported to me, returned to Mother perhaps to inform Her about me. On Her way to Her room She paused for a moment at the door and looking towards me said, "Baba, (son), are you oppressed with trouble? Don't you worry. Everything will be all right."

Then She went away to Her room. Her talk fell flat on me and I found no solace. I must now make up my mind to return to Lucknow next morning for treatment. I did not go to Mother. People flocked to Her room and I could

hear their happy laughter and rejoicing. Perhaps. She was relating some of Her experiences. But. I was in no mood for such stories. The night was fast approaching. My mind was overcast with the thought of the troubles and vexations in store for me during the night. Everyone was happy in the premises with the exception of my poor self. That night whether I ate anything or not, I do not remember. But solitary, brooding, hopeless as I was, I felt Mother was cruel indeed, very cruel to me. I tried to console myself with the thought that what was to happen, must happen, and that there was no help. I reflected bitterly, "what am I to Mother?" Such reflections tormented me and made me still more miserable.

It was past midnight. The paroxysms of asthma, the difficulty in breathing and the strain of sitting up for a long time with practically no food, was more than what I could endure silently. I came out of my room to go to Mother and stole quietly up to Her. The door was ajar. A lamp was burning inside. Mother could not possibly have seen me as I stopped just behind the door. I hesitated to enter and thought of returning. But I heard

Mother's voice. "Come in" she said. My burden was already considerably lightened. I went in. She again said, "Baba, (son), you are suffering much. Is it not so?" "Yes, Mother, I am unable to lie down and sleep", I answered.

"You will be all right if you can just lie down and go to sleep", replied Mother.

I said, 'But that is not possible. I had no sleep for several nights and I am unable to stand any longer.'

Said Mother, after a slight pause, "Do you keep the lamp burning in the room?" 'No' I replied.

She asked, "Do you keep the doors and windows open?" "No, I keep one window open for ventilation", I answered.

"Do you use a blanket or a quilt?" She enquired further.

I said, 'Blanket.'

"That is all right". She was silent for a moment. I also waited. Then She said, "Will you do one thing?"

"Yes, Mother, what is it?" I replied. She said, "Close your doors and windows as usual. Put out your lamp. Then go to bed. Before you lie down, make a clear resolve that you

are going to sleep. And then lie down for rest. Will you do it?" I looked towards the wall dully and said, "I have done all this many times, with no effect."

She said with some warmth, "Do it once more as you are now told and do not worry."

I did not know what to say. I kept quiet ; then slowly left the room. I remembered Her advice, "Do not worry", but my mind was busy. How will it be possible ? If I love Mother, it may be possible. If I fix my attention on Her, it may be easy. Love alone can calm down all mental disturbances. Do I love Mother ?

But does She not love others just as She loves me ? And does not She love Herself ? Thoughts like these kept running in my mind. I went to my room. I did as I was ordered. But before I lay on my bed I sat for a moment with folded hands in order to say my prayers but I could not pray. All my pent-up feelings broke out into sobs and I burst into tears. I needed rest. Would the divine Mother take me on Her lap and give me what I needed ?

c I lay down on my bed. Within a minute or so my eyes were closed and I fell asleep without any effort on my part.

Next morning I got up late. When I opened the door of my room, Lina, a sweet girl-visitor to Mother who is no more alive, came running and said, 'Dada (brother), were you sleeping? Mother enquired of you several times.' I felt ashamed of myself and went straight to Her room.

She smiled and said, "Well Baba, did you have sleep?"

I said, 'Mother, I never slept so happily in my life. I felt I was sleeping on the lap of the Mother'.

Mother said, "Yes, it is the mother's lap where everyone sleeps. She is loving. Is not sleep a manifestation of the mother?"

The same evening, I joined the happy gathering in Mother's room and laughed and jested with them. But all of a sudden I remembered that the night was approaching and feared that my trouble might recur. Mother could read my thoughts. She at once said, "Baba, do as you did last night ; *just as you did*. But you should go to bed earlier to-night. You better go now and rest."

I prostrated myself before Her, inwardly praying for Her blessing and retired. I had plenty of

sleep that night as well and had almost become normal. The third night again Mother's counsel bore fruit and I no more had any fear of the recurrence of my troubles.

Then I went to Mother when She was alone and said, "Mother, it seems to me that I have become all right. There is no trouble with me any more. But do tell me, how have you cured me? You did not give me any medicine. You did not touch me. When you looked at me, I could hardly look at you in the face, so full of troubles and worries was I. When you talked I looked inwardly and felt that I was unmanageable and not worthy to be your son. Tell me, Mother, how have you cured me? Or tell me what I should do if the disease recurs."

Mother looked towards me and said with great concern, "Why should the disease recur? It is already gone."

I said, "Shall I take it that you have cured me?"

Mother looked up with a smile and said, "Baba, you should know that you have cured yourself."

I exclaimed, in surprise, "What!"

Mother repeated with great affection, "*It is you who have cured yourself.*"

I could not understand Her words, but there was no mistaking Her love and affection. I wanted no more. Some of my more sceptical friends ask me at intervals, "Did you have any more attacks?" I am happy to answer them all in the negative.

4

One more episode of a still more intimate nature. A son's relation with his mother must always be somewhat personal. But the feeling of love and gratitude or of repentance impels me to put on record some of my experiences so that others may also share them.

It was the summer of 1943. I had gone to the Asram at Raipur, Dehradun, for a short respite. On arrival I came to know that Mother had also come down from Almora in connection with some *Tajna* (sacrificial ceremony) at Sahasradhara (about five miles from Raipur) and was staying there. I felt happy and eventually met Her there the same day. I found Her in Her usual tranquil condition, spreading happiness around Her. Two or three days

after, when the usual rites and ceremonies were over, She came to Raipur Asram for a halt. She was to return to Almora very soon. I was a mere witness to the daily gathering of men and women who came from Dehradun and attended on Her. I had so far no opportunity to meet Her in private. When at last I did so, She said, to me, "You are also going to Almora." I said, "Mother, I have not brought the necessary out-fit. And Almora is a cold place." Mother said, "It does not matter. You will be given all that you need." I was on the point of saying something. But Mother said, "It is settled then, that you will go to Almora."

I remember I was in a state of mental revolt at that time. I was a prey to the blackest despair. I knew I was helpless, and yet I resented the idea of being helped. I wanted to be left alone. That was why I had chosen to come to Raipur, a comparatively solitary place, in order to regain the composure of my mind but Mother took up the task in Her hands. I had to accompany Her.

We were a party of four including Mother. The story of our journey from Dehradun to Kathgodam alone would fill pages. But I

must hasten to that part of the story which concerns us here. Just before we reached Kathgodam, Mother disclosed Her idea of going to Nainital. This is just like Mother. She never announces beforehand what She is going to do. I was perplexed. I said, 'Mother, I am not going.' She said, "What is the matter with you?" I said. Nainital is a very cold place, colder than Almora, and you know, I have not got any warm clothing with me."

Mother interrupted and said, "That is known. You will get everything that you will need. So come along. The stay at Nainital will be a very short one; say two or three days, then you will also proceed to Almora." I had no inclination to go Almora, so I looked round and said, "Mother, you have got so much luggage with you. Allow me to go to Almora and take the superfluous luggage with me. They are meant for the Asram people of Almora. Why carry them unnecessarily to Nainital?"

Mother seemed to consider my plan and then said, "Allright, if you want to go, then it cannot be helped."

It was mid-day. Kathgodam was warm and stuffy. *Sherbat* (sweet cold drink) was being

prepared and given to us. Fruits were also served. Mother took the trouble to explain to me all about the road from Almora Motor Station to the Asram. It was about two miles. But She told me that I should not take the undulating bridle road although it was a short-cut. According to Her, the motor road was always to be preferred, considering my age and strength. I was not paying much heed because these details I thought, were known to me owing to my long stay at Almora as a teacher twenty years ago. Yet I was not altogether inattentive, because whatever Mother says, even Her lightest words, command attention ; partly because of Her charming manner. She then gave me Her hurricane lantern and instructed me to be very careful on my way. I knew all this was but the outcome of Mother's anxiety for Her child. I remember I got into the mail-car and Mother stood there watching it go. I felt proud of the occasion.

As soon as the car began to move, I felt very unhappy and forlorn. Why did I choose to leave Mother? The car was ascending the motor road and the landscape should have attracted me. But everything appeared stale

and hackneyed to me. Why did I not go with Mother? There was none to talk to me. I was sitting beside the driver and thinking of Mother. I would sometimes doze off. In this manner, somehow, the tedious journey was at last over.

It was dark when I alighted at the station at Almora. I remembered Mother had given me a lantern. How very thoughtful of Her! She had anticipated its need although I had no idea then. The coolies picked up the luggage and began to move off. I had given them positive instructions of the route as Mother had told me. But they chose the short-cut. I discovered it too late. It was no longer possible to retrace my steps. So I followed them with some apprehension with unsteady steps. The road became narrow, craggy and fully of sudden ups and downs. I would survey a few feet of ground with the lantern and then plod on. My nervousness increased and I almost seemed to lose my grip over myself. We had almost reached the Asram when my foot slipped; I tumbled and fell down. One of the coolies threw off his load and came running to me. The chimney of the lantern was broken. My hands

were bruised and my thighs were bleeding. I had also received a terrible jerk in my hip: I however stood up and began to reprimand the coolies. But was it their fault? Like good brothers they took me to the Asram and there I lay myself down as I had reached my journey's end.

Three days after when Mother came, I was somewhat better. But I was still confined to bed. The inmates of the Asram had given me blankets and all that I needed. "They were all attention to me and I ought to have been happy. But one question vexed me, almost tormented me. If Mother knew of the coming accident, why did She not tell me about it?

When Mother came, I was eager for Her sympathy. So on Her approach I said, 'I had an accident.' But to my mortification I found She was stiff.

She said, "(I) do not want to hear." Then She moved in another direction to attend to some *sadhus* who had come with Her from Nainital. It was a sharp rebuff.

Two or three days afterwards when the *sadhus* had left for Badrinath and the Asram

SOME RECOLLECTIONS

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had become comparatively quiet, Mother came to me and said, "Yes, now what about the accident that you had?" I said, "Mother, that day I wanted to speak to you but you said, you did not want to hear. Today you want to know but I do not wish to speak."

Mother said, "It was for getting this reply from you that the question was asked."

My condition I could no longer bear. I said, "Mother, you knew of the accident but never said a word about it. Instead of that you gave me instructions for guidance."

Mother was listening. I continued, "Mother, if you think that I am grown up enough to follow your commandments, I must make it clear that I do not feel myself worthy or competent to receive your advice and follow it. I think I am yet a baby or child in that respect. So if you can accompany your child in all his troubles and ordeals, I remain with you. If not, let us part company. The child is sure to perish. Who can enable a motherless child to survive?"

I do not know why I spoke in this strain. It was not a very baby or childlike statement.

But I had no time to analyse myself, perhaps I was incapable of it. Mother looked blank, like a white sheet of paper, and the next moment there was a great change in Her face. I could discern there all my faults writ large. She took upon Herself the burden of my heart. I knelt down at Her feet and my tears showed that I could no longer think of separation.

5

One last episode. This time an episode purely of imagination, a dream. Dreams about Mother can be narrated by many of us. Mine is a gift to those who are dreamers like myself. I dreamt, I was straw strolling through a rural lane in the midst of natural surroundings. The path moved in a zig-zag manner and beautiful flowers and green creepers were visible on both sides of the fences. There were gardens or villas on either side. Occasionally there would be an isolated cottage. I reached a cottage which was visible from the lane. I slowed my pace and stood at the garden gate and observed that Mother could be seen on the verandah of the cottage. When I saw Mother

there I entered the gate and seemed to have reached my destination.

When I approached Mother, I was startled to find that She had a baby on Her lap. What is this ? There was no one else whom I could ask, I looked at Mother. She looked towards me but immediately was all attention to the child. It was a baby. How was the baby related to Mother ? What an odd question to ask ? Are we not all children of the Mother ? But the question persisted in my mind. I was, no doubt, Mother's son, but in what sense was the baby Hers ? What did it matter if the baby happened to be the physical son of Mother ? So I argued in my dream.

Mother was, all the time, fondling the baby. I thought to myself to put the question in a suitable form. I said, 'Mother, how does the baby get his nourishment ?' Mother smiled and said, "Baby does not like milk from outside. I have to suckle him."

I felt compassion for Mother. I began to scrutinise Her appearance. She looked considerably reduced and Her collar-bones were visible. Certainly the child was a demon and was sucking Her blood and living on it. I

began to detest the child. The child too, perhaps, detested me. Lying on the lap of the Mother, he began to stamp his foot on the ground. Was he not kicking at me? So I thought.

Suddenly my feelings changed in course of the dream. He was, after all, Mother's own son. If I could love Mother so much, could I not love Her baby as well? I looked at the child and tried to feel love for him. Mother saw my loving looks and said, "Would you like to take the baby on your lap?" Realising that Mother might get some relief, I immediately sat down and extended my arms. Mother placed the baby on my lap.

I was happy. I began to ask myself how could I atone for my previous resentment towards the baby? I had thought of him as a demon. I thought that he wanted to kick me. So if I love him I must touch him affectionately.

I affectionately touched his right foot and at heart tried to feel that I really loved him. But immediately something occurred which can only be possible in a dream. His foot dropped out as if it were an artificial one and along with it

the entire leg came out, stuck to my hand and dragged my hand towards my own right leg. There the entire limb of the baby vanished and disappeared. I was extremely upset. I quickly placed my fingers on the left leg of the baby. The same thing happened and the left leg, in the same manner merged into my left leg. His right arm and then left arm, and afterwards other parts of the body, which I was more quick in grasping, in succession thinking of them to be separate tangible entities, proved deceptive in the same manner and so the entire baby merged into my body, limb by limb, one part after another.

Mother was looking towards me and gauging my quick movements and growing bewilderment. I also fixed my gaze on Her and said, 'Mother, what is this? This baby, your own baby, is it my own self? Am I this child who is so ugly looking, fond of kicking others and always sucking your life-blood out of you? Mother, tell me, is it myself? Do tell me.'

I looked staggered. My whole body was pulsating with excitement. But Mother laughed out in Her sweet way. Her peals of laughter were so thrilling and prolonged that they entered

into every fibre of my being. My anxious state, my petty self, in short, my startling dream, all disappeared in the twinkling of an eye.

I was wide awake. It was almost morning. But though no more sleeping, I could still hear Mother's laughter ringing in my ears as if echoing through my room, ultimately finding its way to the world abroad, to mingle with the horizon. It was Mother who transcended my all and yet left me full.

One chapter of my dream-life was over.

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o To conclude. Spring 1945. Basanti Puja (Worship of Goddess Durga in Spring) was being celebrated in the Asram in Benares in Her presence. I had also gone there. I passed through the courtyard where people had assembled in groups. I reached one group. I listened to their conversation. Some one was saying, 'If Mother could appear in the form of Sri Krishna, I would accept Her without hesitation. You see, I regard Sri Krishna as the complete manifestation of God.' I could not hold my tongue. I said, 'Brother, would you be

able to recognise Sri Krishna if he appeared before you in a physical form? Have you ever seen him?' He did not retort but looked extremely discomfited and disturbed. I also fretted and fumed but preferred to move off.

I went upstairs where Mother was walking up and down in the verandah overlooking a part of the Ganges. Some men and women were there watching Her from a respectable distance. I forgot myself. I reached Mother and wanted to walk a few steps with Her.

But I could not walk without talking. I said, 'Mother, why do I like to speak of you so often and so vehemently and bluntly?' Mother listened. I continued, 'Mother, when I am garrulous, I feel puffed up with pride. When words fail, depression sets in. I suffer both ways. What shall I do?' Mother said, "What do you want me to do?" I said, "Mother grant me one favour. Make me speechless about you. I think I should not speak of you. All my prattle is an insult to you. It is already oppressing me." I felt relieved when I laid bare my troubled heart before Her. It was now Her turn to speak. The idol of all loving hearts at last opened Her lips and said. "Recognising

(me) as daughter, you may say what you think. No harm will touch you. Do you understand ?”

I know Her to be my Mother and I, Her son. Out of this devotion some day the real spirit of service may be vouchsafed to me. And then the relationship would be reversed. She would become the daughter and I, as She usually says, the father. I am waiting for that day of service to dawn in my life. “They also serve who stand and wait.”

MOTHER ANANDAMAYI

*By Dilipkumar Roy, Sri Aurobindo
Asram, Pondicherry.*

Those whom Thou once hast touched with
Thy fair eyes
Have known what is the loan of Heaven's
Light,
A bounty none could ever here surmise
In an earth-born woman's gaze which
silvered Night.

Earthly yet not of earth : in life's dark drift
When storms tear through and wilts our
faith in day,
A prey to clouds—the pall could only lift
If the eyes revealed a love-lit soul in play.

For Thee all, all is play : Thou art a child
Of the Mother still, and yet who'll dare
deny—

The Child's the Mother of mothers ? So
Thou art styled
Ananda's Daughter—a gift of the blue sky,

A dowry of Dream to din ! Thy message
rings
To our harassed ears like some melody !
For when Thou speakest the earth-bound
float on wings
Of hope and love, then learn to soar on high.

Old scriptures are life's finger-posts, we
heard ;
 We pored and pored and felt old, satiate
 Until we saw a Face upturned, Godward :
 Not ears—'tis eyes that lead, intoxicate.

O Lotus-Grace blown on our graceless earth !
How shall we pay Thee homage—We
never trod
An alley to Worship ! Pent, alas, from birth
In the sty of worldly wisdom, we shed
our blood

Only for things that break their troths
 for ever
 Of deep fulfilment : science, art and passions
 Still urge us on in life's dismal endeavour :
 'Tis half-lights are adored today of nations.

[illegible]

From infancy we heard of Mother Ind's
Long dynasties of sages high and hoary :
Yet in our Pantheons one seldom finds
A saintly woman's form haloed with glory.

We sing of the Gopies' Krishna-love
 sky-vast,
In the Vedas women wrote great hymns,
 we claim :
But when a woman harks back to the past,
We are vexed and never can find for it
 a name !

So Thou art born to us, O Damsel deep
With wisdom and love, divine, and with,
Thy sure
Answers and raptures make even
stalwarts weep
And Pundits laugh—one knows not with
what lure !

O mystic Minstrel holding the Wizard's
Wand!

O Envoi of the Ethereal to Clay !
Teach us until our minds can understand
Thy gospel of Ananda, and come to stay !

21. 3. 1946

MOTHER—As I have known Her.

Girijashankar Bhattacharjya, M.A.
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On the eve of the summer vacation of 1925, probably towards the end of April, my very revered friend Rai Bahadur Pran Gopal Mukherjee, who was then Dy. Post Master General at Dacca, invited me there, holding out as a bait the likelihood of hearing the exposition of the 'Bhagabata' by Prabhupada Pran Gopal Goswami as well as Prabhupada Radha Binode Goswami and also meeting a 'Mayee' who, the Rai Bahadur added, had impressed him very deeply. I did not give much thought to the Mayee but accepted my friend's invitation with some alacrity as both the Goswamies he mentioned (alas, they have now passed away !) were very learned and commanded great respect as sound exponents of the doctrine of the Bengal School of Vaishnavism. So I went to Dacca ; and a day or two after reaching there, I

accompanied the Rai Bahadur and Srijut Nani Gopal Banerjee, then lecturer in Sanskrit, Dacca University, to Shahbagh, a magnificent garden of the Nawab of Dacca. The late Ramani Mohan Chakravarty, known subsequently as Bholanath, husband of the Mother Anandamayi (who, by the way, had not yet been given that name) was Superintendent of the Shahbagh, so called because the mortal remains of Shah Saheb, a great Muslim saint are interred there. No sooner did Ramani Babu see me than he recognised me but I had no recollection of having ever seen him. It seems that a few years before our meeting in 1925 he was working in the Kutchery of the Nawab of Dacca in my own village Ashtagram in the Mymensingh District and was well-known to our family, living, as he did, only about two furlongs from our home. I was almost always away from home and was never introduced to him, although he had noticed me. Ramani Babu was extremely cordial to me, and generous though he was by very nature, and to everybody, I should be wanting in gratitude, if I did not pay a tribute to the great affection that he always bore towards me. But I digress.

Ramani Babu was then living in a small building in the garden (Shahbag) with his family, i.e., Mother Anandamayi and one or two more members. There were two rooms (as far as I remember) in the building, one rather small and the other a little bigger. The shades of evening were gathering, and the extensive and carefully tended garden looked sombre owing to the tall and leafy trees, filling our hearts with reverence, while the sweet smell* from the numerous flower plants nearby added a rare charm. We were given seats (*asanas*) on the floor of the bigger room and near the door between the rooms sat Ramani Babu while in the small room but near him sat Mother. She did not yet speak to any stranger and questions put to Her would be answered through Ramani Babu. She sat partly veiled so that I could not get a full view of Her face.

What questions were put to Her on this occasion and what Her answers were, I have absolutely no recollection, and for the matter of that, I never heard them. No sooner had I taken my seat than I felt myself in a peculiar state of mind, of which I had no previous experience and the reason for which is yet a mystery to me.

I had gone to see Mother with hardly any preconceived notion and indeed, as I have said before, I did not expect to be very much interested. I had however, and have yet a very great respect for Rai Bahadur Pran Gopal Mukherjee who had taken great pains for more than two years (1921-23) to instruct a friend of mine and myself in the *Sastras*, particularly 'the Gita'. Nevertheless his enthusiasm was not mine in many things.

The state of mind of which I speak, is difficult to describe; in any case I cannot give an adequate idea of it. All thoughts and ideas seemed to have vanished from my mind; and 'practically oblivious though I was of the surroundings, there was a sense of pleasure, very great pleasure, arising from what I do not know. Almost as long as I was in the presence of Mother my mind was in that state. I left the place however with the Rai Bahadur, somewhat surprised at what had happened and spoke to him on the way about it. He gave me the *Sastric* name for it, which need not be mentioned here. What struck me then, as it strikes me now, is that this was an experience which came, as it were, of itself. I should have regarded it as

an accident were it not for the fact that the same or, at least, a similar experience came to me next year (1926) at 'Shibnivas' in the Nadia District in the same circumstances i.e., sitting near Mother while the evening closed upon us. I was therefore led to think that on both these occasions Mother, for reasons best known to Her, induced this peculiar state of mind in me, and since I found it very pleasurable I felt attracted towards Her. Thus began an acquaintance, which Her ineffable grace has ripened into a relation no whit less dear than the dearest in the world.

By 1927 Mother began to talk to all who sought Her blessings without the restrictions She had imposed upon Herself so far. Oh ! For the glorious days we passed in Her company then ! Now She does not go inside the dwelling-rooms in the residence of *Grihasthas* ; and wherever She goes She has to be accommodated in a temple or a Dharamsala. But in those days She came to our houses just like a member of the family. The ladies of the house would prepare their beds alongside that of Mother where they would sleep with Her. But generally sleep there would be very little, for there would be *Kirtan*

and conversation with Her till very late at night, sometimes even until the early hours of the morning. The Mother on these occasions would listen sympathetically to all, sometimes speak of Her own early experiences and above all, by kindliness of speech, gracious looks and sweet manners, inspire not only love and affection for Her but also a faith that Her presence enveloped us and would protect us in all circumstances. We did not care to ask ourselves if She was a *Siddha Mahatma* (i.e. one who has attained salvation) or an *Avatar* (i.e. incarnation of the Divine Spirit). We felt that She was Mother and that we might depend upon Her. Could we but be with Her always in this life and hereafter, we thought, we would be perfectly happy, and more we did not want. Thus it is seen that She made an assault upon our hearts and they were Hers before we knew it,—the intellect came into play much later.

In February 1945 the Bhaktas of Mother at Berhampore (Bengal) made arrangements for a celebration lasting for a fortnight in view of Her presence in their midst and some *Sannyasies* and *Sadhus* travelled all the way from Benares

and other distant places to attend the function. I met there a very learned Swami of the Sree Sampradaya, who had come from Brindaban. In course of conversation he asked me "What do you think of Mother?" I replied in a non-committal manner "The Divine Power (Daivi Shakti) seems to be manifest in Her."

यद् यद् विभूतिमत्सर्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽंशं संभवम् ॥ (Gita 10-41)

'Whatever is of Extraordinary Power, influence or glory is a manifestation of my essence or is a part of me.'

The Swamiji said, "Mother is certainly a saint of the highest order. ("उच्च कोटिका सन्तहाय" ।)

We cannot however, believing as we do in the Sastras, agree with people who declare that She is an *Avatar* or that She is Bhagawati Herself". The Swamiji continued, "Well, you see we consider the *Sastras* to be the very voice of God and we must have proper reverence for them. A story is told about Bhisma deva ; it is probably nothing but a story but the lesson conveyed is well worth attention. Be that as it may, it is said when he came to Gaya for the *Sraddha* of his deceased father he, as usual, was placing the *Pindas* on the sand of the river

Falgu. The hand of his father came out of the Earth and he heard his father's voice asking him to place the 'pindas' on that hand. He refused saying that the *Sastras* had given no such direction and he was bound to act according to them." The conversation with the Swamiji on this point ended here, as I had no intention nor was I qualified to carry on a discussion on such matters with a man of his learning. Another very old saintly person, widely recognised as a *Sadhu* of high order, on the other hand, prostrated himself before Mother saying that She was the Universal Mother Herself (स्वयं जगदम्बा). When somebody asked Mother why She allowed him to prostrate himself thus before Her, for at this, His disciples were mortified, She replied, "Tell them that the feet of the Baba (Father, meaning the saint) are always on my head."

I have mentioned earlier that we did not in the least concern ourselves with the question whether Mother was an *Avatar* or a *Siddha Mahatma*. I am yet of the opinion that for us it is an idle and an entirely meaningless discussion, and what I have said above only indicates that divergent opinions may be held

on the point even by competent people who love and respect Mother.

I find it difficult to understand why some people exercise themselves so much about this. Does an incarnation, for ordinary mortals, mean anything more than a person filled with the Divine Spirit? There are undoubtedly subtleties in connection with the theory of incarnation* which are beyond the conception of ordinary people and which have bewildered even the greatest of philosophers. But those, for all practical purposes, (i.e. for the man who is setting out on the path of self-realisation and does not care for mere reputation for learning) are subtleties pure and simple. An incarnation then represents the Divine Grace trying to uplift mankind.

विभिर्षि रूपाण्यवबोध आत्मा क्षेमाय लोकस्य चराचरस्य ।

सत्त्वोपपन्नानि सुखावहानि सतामभद्राणि मुहुः खलानाम् ॥

Bhagabata 10, 2, 23.

He, who is to be known only in a state of superconsciousness being 'Jnana' itself, assumes forms for the good

* e.g. The nature and constitution of the body assumed by an Avatar, or does He really take a body or but seems to do so?

of mankind. These forms are 'Sattvic' in essence and though pleasing to the good, are disastrous for the wicked.

While all other creatures come to the world in accordance with the law of Karma, the 'avatars' come of their own free will.

And what about *Siddha Mahatmas*? At least of the kind to which Mother might be considered to belong? Since there is no record of any regular *Sadhana* by Her in this body the natural inference would be that the *Siddhi* was attained in a previous body. Such *Mahatmas*, as is well known, are also free from *Maya* and come to the earth of their own will, proceeding from their *Samskaras* of doing good to the world. For practical purposes, therefore, the difference between *Avatars* and such *Mahatmas* may be overlooked.

Some hold, however, that the difficulty of regarding Mother as a *Siddha Mahatma* is insurmountable. For, as has already been said, we have no information of any *Sadhana* by Her in this body.

On this point there is no room for any doubt. I have made enquiries for myself. The first occasion when Mother was discovered to be in *Bhava Samadhi* (भाव समाधि) was when

She lived in our village and I have the evidence of reliable people, indeed of everybody living near about the place, that it lasted for nineteen hours during which She was, as it were, lifeless, so much so that ants gathered round her eyes. The different stages that She seemed to pass through after this, came naturally and were completed within a short time, and also without any instruction whatsoever from any living being, indeed, for some time, inspite of the opposition of relatives. They all point to the strange but incontrovertible fact that the various stages and forms of *Sadhana* or spiritual exercises and evolution took place automatically in Her body without any active agency on Her part. The theory that Her Siddhi has not been attained in this body but in a previous one does not also seem to be tenable since She is reported to have said that She had no previous birth.

Again ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति 'one who knows the Brahman becomes the Brahman Himself.'

• This too, some hold, is not applicable to Mother because, as She says there has never been any question of knowing or not knowing so far as She is concerned. Thus supercon-

sciousness may be regarded as Her *Swabhava* (स्वभावः) i.e. it is in the very nature of Her being.

This diversity of opinion regarding Her essential nature hardly ever touches Mother and Her reply to those who ask Her, "What really are you?" hits, in my opinion, the nail right on the head. She says "I am what you think I am." Yes, it is we who make our God. This is not blasphemy but the greatest truth. Nothing there is or can be which is not filled with the Spirit Divine, nay, which is not a manifestation of the Divinity. तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेवानु-
प्राविशत्

"God created the universe and entered into every particle of it. He is indeed both the creator and the material out of which He creates." (निमित्त कारणम् and उपादान कारणम्)

Thus God is for us everywhere, in us and away from us.

"Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems ;
And lo ! Christ walking on the water
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames !"

Yes, cherish the thing or person where His presence impresses you and if you feel Divinity

is manifest in one, such as Mother Anandamayī, who, by common consent, is certainly competent to guide our steps on the narrow road to Salvation, 'अणुः पन्था विततः पुराणो' 'the narrow far-stretching ancient path', you should consider yourself extremely fortunate. Remember however Her frequently uttered admonition to distinguish between खण्ड (the limited, finite) and अखण्ड (the unlimited, Infinite) and confine your attention to Her Greater Self where She is at one with you and all others and Divinity Itself. Thus when Mother says "I am what you think I am," She utters a great truth. It is for you either to love Her as a finite being and be blessed in having the kindest of earthly mothers or as a manifestation of the Divine Mother, in Her infinite self, and see the grand vista of immortality open before your eyes.

The whole problem of incarnation, is often taken as depending upon the personality or impersonality of the Divine. The philosopher, believing in an impersonal God, finds the question perplexing. The objection of the *Swamiji* from Brīndāban referred to before, regarding the Mothers' being an Avatār, is based on his

interpretation of the Sastric texts. A *Vaisnab* as he is, he certainly has a firm faith in *Avatars* but he finds no authority in the *Sastras* as he understands them, for Mother being regarded as one of them. The other saint, on the other hand, depends upon his intuition. How are we, however, to understand the latter's expression '*Svayam Jagadamba*'. Does he by '*Jagadamba*' mean a distinct person? Those who know him and have had the privilege of hearing him expound his views on religion will hardly think so. At any rate, I never could understand him that way. "Neti, Neti," exclaimed Yajnavalkya in describing the Ultimate Reality "नेति नेति न ह्येतस्मादिति नेत्यन्यत् परमस्त्यथ नामधेयं सत्यस्य सत्यमिति" *

"Not this, Not this"—that is the Supreme indication of the Brahman, and He is the Truth of truths.

Surely this cannot be a person, as we understand the word. Does the Impersonal then ever embody Himself as a person? It seems to us that He will then deny His own nature and commit suicide, as it were. The *Bhagvata* speaks of the wonderful deeds of many '*avatars*'

* बृहदारण्यक उपनिषत् २.३.६ ॥

gradually leading us to the *Leela* of Sri Krishna, but it takes care always to impress upon us His Infinite and really Impersonal nature and through forms to the formless, through the Personal to the Impersonal, it takes us, from the Material to the Immaterial (चिन्मय), from the Finite to the Infinite (सच्चिदानन्द). Thus of Sri Krishna it says :—

न चान्तर्नबहि र्यस्य न पूर्वं नापि चापरम्
 पूर्वपरं वहिश्चान्तर्जगतां यो जगच्च यः ।
 तं मत्वाऽत्मजमव्यक्तं मर्त्यलिङ्गमधोक्षजम्
 गोपिकोलूखले दाम्ना बबन्ध प्राकृतं यथा ॥

Bhagabata 10 ; 9 ; 11c

“He has no inside or outside, no East or West but He is East and West, inside and outside of the Universe, nay, He is the Universe itself. Infinite and imperceptible to the gross senses though He is, the Gopika (Yashoda) regarding Him as mortal and her own child, tied Him to a wooden mortar used for husking rice.”

Numerous passages of similar import can be cited. Sri Krishna is thus regarded as the Impersonal Person—a logical impossibility. Who knows, however, that Divine Logic is not different from human or that He does not

transcend Logic? Let us here stop for a moment to consider the other side of the picture. It is agreed on all hands, indeed, mystics of all lands and times have declared that by meditation man can reach a state when he is completely identified with the highest Reality, the Infinite. There is a complete mingling of the Finite with the Infinite, all barriers having crumbled down, all limitations evaporated.

“But, first, a hush of peace,
 a soundless calm descends ;
 The struggle of distress
 and fierce impatience ends ;
 Mute music soothes my breast,
 unuttered harmony
 That I could never dream,
 till Earth was lost to me.
 Then dawns the Invisible ;
 the Unseen its truth reveals,
 My outward sense is gone,
 my inward essence feels ;
 Its wings are almost free, its home,
 its harbour found,
 Measuring the gulf, it stoops
 and dares the final bound.”

Emily Bronte has thus tried to describe her experience in verse. Anybody in describing this state must indulge in verbal contradictions like 'Mute music'. A great mystic speaks of the "Ray of Divine darkness." Indeed contradictions seem to merge into one another in this state, the Finite loses itself, nay, finds its real self in the Infinite. The distinction between the Finite and Infinite thus does not seem to be an irreconcilable one. Why should not then the Infinite manifest in the very same way as He has manifested Himself in the universe, but in an intenser degree in a person? Why should He not shine forth in all His effulgence through a person? Indeed in all that is regarded as finite, the Infinite is already present; for all existence is in Him and there is no outside. We speak of such a person as an '*avatār*' and '*avatars* are numberless'. To limit them to ten or twelve or fifteen is open to the same objection as insisting upon the singular number. Let us not, however, forget—

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥

"It is only the poor in intellect that regard Him as limiting himself when he appears as an '*avatār*'.

They do not know His Supreme Nature, transcending everything.”†

Unless we remember that Reality is infinite and impersonal at the same time that it shines forth in forms perceptible to us ; unless we Remember “नित्यैव सा जगन्मूर्ति स्तया सर्वमिदं ततम् ।”* the universe is Her image and She pervades all that we see, but She is eternal ; if we even for a moment lose sight of the अखण्डविभाव (the all-embracing nature) ; if we forget परं भावमव्ययमनुत्तमम् (the Supreme Nature, always whole and complete, than which there is nothing better), our worship cannot lead us to the path of immortality, to the highest realisation where all personality must be transcended, where, as has been aptly said “God in the depths of us receives God who comes to us”, which is “direct intuition of, a union with, an ultimate Spiritual Reality that is perceived as simultaneously beyond the Self and in some way within it.”

Pre-occupation with form and person can only make our passage to the formless more painful and such a passage there is bound to be

* श्रीश्रीचण्डी प्र. च. १।६४

† गीता ७।२४

before we reach the blissful state. I remember when in 1927, Mother was staying with me for a day or two at Rajshahi, late Professor Aswini Kumar Mukherji put some questions to Her. Of these I distinctly remember two. In those days Mother used to have *Bhavasamadhi*, sometimes so deep that She seemed almost lifeless. Hardly could any respiration be perceived and the pulse felt at the wrists. Sometimes again She would roll from one end of the room to the other; and on one particular occasion in 1926, I remember She moved forward and backward on a fairly large platform in the Asram of the late Balananda Brahmachari Maharaj at Deoghar. Her movement was so rhythmical and yet so awe-inspiring that I, for one, was reminded of the Cosmic Dance of the Devi (*Kali*). Again, at times, Mother would in Her '*Abesh*' (trance-like state), utter sweet and sonorous '*Stotra*' (verses), not however in ordinary Sanskrit and with a preponderance of *Bijas*.

Once again I have digressed.

Referring to Mother's deep *Samadhi* Professor Mukherji asked, "How do you feel when you are in this state?" I am afraid She

will not answer such a question now. She tried even then to avoid answering ; but the professor, old as he was, respectfully insisted. Mother then said, "As you sit in this room you can see everything outside through the doors and windows, but you cannot when they are shut. This body too, feels as if all its doors and windows are shut. Again when you take a handful of mud and wash it in the water of a pond you see how finely it spreads on the water. So does this body feel." I do not know what Professor Mukherji understood but to me the meaning was clear. I understood Mother to say that She became inwardly conscious while Her outward consciousness received a check for the time being, and She had a sense of expansion—Infinite Consciousness and Infinite Expansion. This question is not, however, relevant to what I was saying but the next one is.

Professor Mukherji asked, "Do you perceive the presence of any god or goddess at the time?" Mother tried to parry a good long while saying that gods and goddesses might be seen if one wished to do so. But the professor insisted, "Do *you* see them?" And finally she

said, "They were seen before". I understood, therefore, that She had passed from all forms to the Formless.* Thus must all seekers of Truth and Reality do before their efforts are crowned with success. The more ardently we cling to forms, the more will this passage be difficult. Every devotee knows that the first steps are easy and pleasant enough provided we can discipline ourselves, the only struggle here is in accustoming ourselves to the treading of a new path, after casting off old habits. This is more or less a matter of sturdiness of purpose. Once, however, we can form new habits the difficulty disappears, but the attachment to old habits and preferences blocks our way. The great thing then, is to keep our mind open, to be always in a recipient frame of mind, to enquire, and to continue knocking at the door, to seek. Ram Thakur Mahasaya once told me "अन्वेषणं साधनं" i.e., to seek is to practise *Sadhana*. But even such a seeker, if he has been overmuch in love with a particular form, will either lose his openness of mind and will seek no longer or will

* It has been already said that the various stages came to Her of themselves.

be in great distress when it, in the usual course of *Sadhana*, vanishes. He will miss the form, and will not appreciate the blissfulness of the state he will then be in, and until he can acclimatise himself, so to say, to it, further progress will be blocked. Progress, I believe, is eternal and the bliss of union with the Infinite ever-new, seeming ever to grow in intensity.

Mother, to me, therefore, is one through whom shines forth in all its effulgence the Infinite and when I bow down to Her, I bow down to It (तत्). At the same time, however, I am not blind to, nay I value very much, the human kindness in Her, Her solicitude for the least little of our comforts when we are with Her, the sweetness of Her speech and smile, the affectionate enquiry about our welfare. Call Her an 'avatar' if you like or a '*Siddha Mahatma*' if you prefer, (I have already referred to Mother's declaration "I am what you think I am") it makes no difference to me for all practical purposes. Is it a tiny tot that has been brought to Her? See, how Her face beams! Does a school or college girl want to talk to Her? How kindly She receives Her! Can you be

half as tender as She is to the sick and decrepit? And has anybody ever had elsewhere such a balm of sympathy in the loss of a near and dear one? And yet if you are tired of walking in the mazes of Philosophy, in a few words She points out the way and you are thrilled with surprise and delight. Or if in your *Sadhana* a knot has to be straightened out, seek Her help and see what happens. Yes, 'Avatar', 'Siddha Mahatma', whatever She may be, above all She is the Mother, ever tender, ever helpful, radiating love and affection—whose very sight purifies and ennobles.

That expression "Shine forth" which I have used, reminds me of an experience. It was in 1926 or 27. Mother was at Dacca, (Shahbag) and I saw Her on my way to my native village. It was about 9 o'clock in the morning. She was sitting on a cot in a small room and I squatted on the floor. There was some ordinary conversation and for a fraction of a second I looked away from Her. The next moment when I turned to Her, gone was the ordinary Bengali lady and instead a resplendent form with light shining out of every pore of Her body dazzled my eyes. I remember I asked myself, "Where

is 'the third eye ?'* On other occasions as well, I noticed similar trans-figurations. It seems to me She no longer has these transfigurations, nor does She have "*abesh*" or '*samadhi*' as She used to have before. Instead She seems now to live for ever on a plane difficult for ordinary people to conceive. Once She was asked in my presence, this also was many years ago, "Can those who are ever conscious of the *Brahman* have dealings with other people?" Her reply was in the affirmative. I feel She is now like that. Sympathetic and tender She undoubtedly is, yet a mystery seems to envelop Her. I feel She has travelled away from us although I know that nothing can be more false than this. She once said, "Are we separate?" Nay Mother, I know we are not, and in that knowledge is bliss; but I want to realise the truth of this, to be always conscious of this.

Were I to point out one characteristic which above all shines in the Mother, I would, at once say "Non-attachment." She is kind, no one can be kinder; She is affectionate, no one can have

* Divinities of the Hindu Pantheon are generally represented with a third eye on the forehead.

more affection ; She is sympathetic, no one can be more ; She is solicitous of our welfare, I have not seen more solicitude in any one. My daughter-in-law, a young girl, was with Her at Bindhyachal for a few days and every letter that she then wrote was full of the description of what Mother did for her, how She took care of her ; so that inspite of her shyness she was not the least uncomfortable and she had hardly ever been looked after so carefully. Even now when speaking of Mother her face lights up with joy. That is the feeling everyone has in the company of Mother. And yet She is completely non-attached, nay, it is because she is non-attached that She can be so affectionate, so sympathetic, so kind. This sounds like a paradox, but is nevertheless true. For what is it that clouds our vision ? Certainly attachment. When I mourn the loss of a dear one, what I really mourn is *my* loss and not the dear one's. Were we to think more of the dear one, we might, for all we know, be glad at his or her release from the bondage of the flesh—in the majority of cases, certainly from pain and suffering. So long as there is attachment we refer to our gain or loss in every matter, how-

ever subconsciously it may be, and are joyful or sorrowful accordingly. In such circumstances there cannot be any real sympathy or kindness. We are so much obsessed by attachment that we fail to realise this at once, but if we give it some thought we shall no doubt see the point. A non-attached man having no axe of his own to grind is the fittest to be really charitable and kind. From this non-attachment again proceeds another peculiarity of Mother, in that nobody, whatever his character, seems to be unwelcome to Her. Her patience too is inexhaustible. In Calcutta I have seen Her surrounded by innumerable people almost the whole day and far into the night, but She had the same gracious demeanour throughout and Her kindly smile never left Her face. People of all sorts and condition come to Her and probably no one goes away without feeling, however slightly, the better for the visit.

The next characteristic of the Mother that I would mention is Her unwillingness to impose Her will upon anybody. I have never known Her do so for all these 20 years and more. She suggests, She recommends, She says it would be proper to do such and such things in the cir-

cumstances, but with a fine delicacy of feeling, never insists upon anybody following a particular line of action both in matters earthly and spiritual. In-deed the liberty that She gives to all, often makes us apprehend that there is no sufficient cohesion among the followers of the Mother. This does not trouble Her in the least, for She is not out to form any new sect or party. On the contrary all sects and creeds dissolve of themselves in Her presence and under Her influence. In this connection it is necessary to consider one thing. Does Mother say everything that She utters from a high plane?—in other words, can we regard all that She utters to proceed from Her superconscious state? I believe I can do nothing better than translate Mother's words on this point from the Bengali book on Her by Mr. Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta whose representation of Her has all the marks of strict veracity. "When you talk in a wordly manner there will be both truth and untruth in your speech for there are both truth and untruth in this world." (The meaning is, as we can infer from the context, that it is futile to expect absolute truth in the speech of a person, whoever he may be, when he speaks in

the manner of the world. For no one who has not attained to superconsciousness can be really truthful in his speech, nay, have any idea of the truth—from this point of view. Of course wilful misrepresentation is not in question) Mother continues, "When I speak in the manner of the world, laugh and joke with you, you should understand me in that way (i. e. as you understand an ordinary person.) For instance, suppose I say, 'Fetch a glass of water from that jug.' You go and find that there is no water in it. You may then think that the Mother has been betrayed into an untrue statement for She thought that there was water in the jug (i. e. you may think that the Mother has no perception of the true state of things). But if you judge it from the worldly point of view you cannot call it an untruth. When you, too, speak in this fashion you do not tell an untruth. It only proves that your inference about water in the jug is incorrect. *When I talk with you I talk in the same manner.*

"If you think that I know everything, then I cannot have any conversation with you. For, if I know everything what should I ask you ? I cannot then enquire whether you have had

your bath, or your food, for I know all. Besides this, there is a state wherein there is no distinction of truth and untruth. But in that state there cannot be any dealings in the manner of the world. For that will cause confusion in this world. Everything here in this world is founded upon distinctions like that between truth and untruth. Great disorder will be caused if in worldly affair we make the super-conscious state where all distinctions merge, the basis of our conduct.

“There is another state besides these two. In this, whatever you say, comes to be true. *Whatever I may say in such a state is bound to be true.*”

Mr. Datta Gupta asked, “Mother, what will happen if anybody has so much faith in you that he regards all your utterances to be invariably true?” Mother replied, “If anybody has such a strong faith in me, all my utterances *to him* will be true.” It seems to me that not infrequently has much misunderstanding been caused and even undesirable consequences ensued from thoughtlessly regarding some of Mother’s words as inspired and proceeding from the superconscious state. Indeed, as has already

been stated, very seldom, if ever, does She command but only suggests. Thus whenever I have found myself unable to agree with Her on a matter and have submitted my opinion, She has not said anything more. Naturally my conclusion is that Mother does not approve of abrogation of individual judgment.

If our aim be attainment of Superconsciousness, or Supreme Awareness or तत्त्वज्ञान (a knowledge of the Truth or Reality), that brings in a mingling of the Finite with the Infinite,

(ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् । Gita 18-15)
it will not do to shirk responsibilities and suppress the conscience, darken the little light that has been given to us. Not uncritical dependence upon anyone but विचार (vichara i. e. reasoning, of course, with a view only to discovering the truth) is the greatest of our friends and in no circumstances, can we give it up altogether. Many of us claim to be शरणागत— i. e. to have surrendered, without realising what true surrender is. This only makes us false to ourselves and leads to darkness and confusion. In determining our duty we should, as it has been prescribed, take into consideration (1) the Preceptor's advice (गुरुवाक्य) (2) the direction.

given in the Sastras (शास्त्रवाक्य) and (3) the dictates of our own conscience. Whenever we fail to do this, there is every chance of our losing our foothold.

Mother is absolutely without any संकल्प i. e., motive. This sounds strange to ordinary mortals, all whose actions more or less proceed from a purpose. When asked as to what should be done in future regarding anything, Her habitual reply is जो हो जाय ; wait for whatever happens. This is not as we might hastily suppose putting off things in the manner of lazy men but it means that she acts spontaneously on the inspiration of the moment. Frequently has it happened during Her travels that railway tickets have been bought at Her direction for places not very far although Her ultimate destination was far enough. Starting from Calcutta, for instance, tickets were bought for Benares, where again from the very railway station the journey was continued to Delhi and then in a similar manner to Simla. This kind of motivelessness I have noticed in other great saints as well. It is this want of purpose or motive that makes Mother's actions tantamount to लीला and indeed the actions of persons like

Her make it possible for us to believe that the whole universe is the लीला of the Eternal.

Mother's way of bringing others to Her point of view, if necessary, is also peculiar. I will give an instance. It is well known that Bholanath would sometimes insist on doing things that happened to come to his mind like a perverse child. In this, as in many other things, he was a veritable child,—simple, frank, truthful and always anxious to help. Mother, as is also well-known, would never directly go against his wishes. Indeed on this point, as in everything else, She set an example to the most devoted of wives. On a certain occasion in my house at Rajshahi, Bholanath insisted that a goat should be sacrificed. I was in great difficulty, for I could never think of doing such a thing. As luck would have it, somebody at this time happened to bring a goat along to the great joy of Bholanath. I spoke to Mother, of course without his knowledge and She said, "Wait and let us see what happens." I was extremely worried. She, in the meantime, lay down and seemed to go to sleep. Preparations were made for taking the goat with suitable Puja (पूजा) to a Kali temple. Naturally there

was some delay. In any case arrangements for the sacrifice were not made quickly enough and when the party with the Puja arrived at the temple the priest said Dashami (tenth day of the moon) having set in a few minutes before, there could be no animal sacrifice that day. I did not think I was yet out of the wood, for Bholanath might insist on the sacrifice the next day, but to my great relief, he forgot all about it. And Mother—what was She doing? She sat up when the party had started for the temple!

The article has already grown long and I will now conclude. Before I do so I wish once again to impress upon my readers that neither by knowledge of the *Sastras* nor by *Sadhana* am I qualified to say what Mother really is. To me She is more or less a fascinating Mystery, an attractive and elevating Personality, with Infinity brooding over Her; and to know Her is definitely blissful. Thousands all over India have now come in contact with Her and, to say the least, hundreds have been attached to Her. It is not at all likely that all these will have the same idea about Her. May we have regard for all of them

nevertheless ; for Truth is elusive and has many facets. Dull uniformity is not necessarily its hall-mark. The man who *sincerely* regards Mother as but an ordinary woman with extraordinary spiritual development is, in my opinion more blessed, in a way, than one who *lightly* talks of Her as a divinity that has strayed into this world of dust and storm. The great thing is to fix our attention upon Mother, Her words and action, not at all on the sundry theories and legends that float upon the stream of popular opinion. I may even go further and say that we should beware of the legends.

May the bliss of Mother descend upon us all ! May we all realise the truth about Her ! May we all be one in Her Infinitude !

Om Santi.

SRI SRI MA

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(*Extracts from Chapter Ten of "Matri Darsan"*
by Bhairi. Translated by G. C. Dasgupta.)

It is beyond our ordinary intelligence to understand what Mother really is. Though She is constantly saying, "I am but a wayward crazy daughter (pagli) of yours", yet underlying all Her movements and behind Her ever-enchanted Leela amongst us, is to be discerned the manifestation in bodily form of the Supreme Divine Mother-Power.

Though living day and night in the midst of the thousand turmoils of the busy world, Sri Sri Ma keeps ever fresh the perennial fountain of Her joy. Her pure serene gaze, the unrestricted flow of Her divinely sportive life ringing with laughter, gratify the infinitely various sentiments of all creatures. Thus it would be no exaggeration to call Her the embodiment of Universal Mother.

Some say that She is "the visible Incarnation of the Supreme Goddess of the Universe,"

others that She is "a *sadhika* (an aspirant) who has attained salvation in this life." We, however, think that "She is but what one sees Her to be." Even at the very first sight, a contact with Her tranquil and universally pleasing spirit, brings about a transformation of feeling in the heart of even those who are most averse to religion. In Her vicinity, devout feelings are awakened into activity even in the most arid of hearts, and the vibrations of one universal existence overpower the heart of ordinary mortals like the unending restless waves of the ocean.

Once when, asked about Her "Diksa" (Spiritual initiation) and Her "Guru" (Spiritual guide), Mother replied,—“In childhood, parents, after marriage, the husband, and in all conditions everything throughout the world are my Guru. But know in your heart of hearts that, really speaking, Guru is only the ONE, Himself.” Just as from the worldly point of view, Mother appears as an ideal daughter, wife and mother, similarly from the spiritual standpoint, various Yogic paths or ways of Bhakti, Jnan or Raj Yoga, or the diverse modes of *Sadhana*, indicated by different schools and doctrines such as

Monism, Dualism and qualified Monism are clearly represented in Her sayings.

From Her trance like conditions witnessed during "Kirtans," She may be well regarded as a great Vaisnab; again from the natural aptitude noticed in Her for the worship of Siva, Durga, Kali and other deities according to Tantric rites or from the devoted performance of Vedic sacrifices (Yajnas) it would not be an over-statement to say that She is the supreme Deity embodying all gods and goddesses.

She may be designated a great "Yogi" (an adept in Yoga) from the supernatural powers observed in Her life in such abundance from the very beginning, even without any spiritual practice, as if they were but normal or routine activities. There will be also no hesitation to characterise Her as a Sage (Rishi) to whom the Mantras (mystic-formulas) have been revealed through many Suktas (sacred texts) and Hymns in a language like that of the Vedas, that found expression in Her utterances during trance.

Her intuitive conclusions based on personal realisation of the Paths of Knowledge, Devotion and of Sastric rites have filled with astonishment many an Eastern and Western philosopher, both

young and old. The difference between those who have progressed towards perfection by following some limited and specialised mode of *Sadhana* such as knowledge, Yoga or Devotion and Sri Sri Ma is that in Her are united together in a wonderful synthesis all those limited and specialised means and methods. From this proceeds incessantly Her boundless power for human uplift.

Unique and incomparable in the present age are Her gracious and charming appearance, Her patience and endurance, Her simplicity, Her invariably kind and gay, light-hearted sportiveness, Her unsullied beneficent gaze, Her uniform attitude towards all, gentle and compassionate, irrespective of caste and creed, Her eternally free spirit beyond the reach of opposites. She cannot be described as a *Sadhika* (spiritual aspirant) because all who have been observing Her from Her very infancy say that She has remained in the same state from Her very childhood in Her actions and feelings. No one has ever noticed in Her any attempt at *Sadhana* or spiritual practice.

The various natural or supernatural powers which are manifested at all times and under

all circumstances through the medium of Her body flow spontaneously for the good of Her numerous Bhaktas or devotees.

• They are altogether independent of any desire or reluctance or any purposeful spiritual effort on Her part. When libations of "Ghee" (clarified butter) are offered into the glowing sacrificial fire, the flames flare up in accordance with the natural law, the whole atmosphere becomes purified and filled with the fragrance, but after a while no trace is left of the libation in the sacrificial flames; they keep on burning steadily with uniform brightness. So also in response to the reverential offering of homage by the devotees at the altar of Mother's heart, Her speech, looks and face become saturated and aglow with love and affection, flowing spontaneously like milk from the mother's breast, and the next moment they subside and merge into Her natural gracious expansive composure.

• There is no conflict in Her between desire and aversion. Attachment and detachment find no play in Her through the medium of Her will. The Eternal Truths which have been manifesting themselves of their own accord to

the human mind as the foundations of all religions and all activities for the good of the Universe, surround and invest Her with their radiance; glimpses and suggestions of these shine through all Her actions and conduct. Her life illustrates how a person can move freely on the spiritual plane without losing grip over himself and at the same time fulfilling all the obligations of the world.

We observe in the life of Sri Sri Ma that She is always eager to promote the good of the world, entrusting the burden of maintaining Her body on others, as it were; and releasing Herself completely from all labours and attention for Her own body, She has dedicated Herself completely to the achievement of welfare of the universe. Judged by worldly standards, She possesses nothing which She can call Her own. All places are Her own, all creatures are Her intimate friends and children; She says, "This body sees the whole universe as a garden, and you are like flowers blooming in it. This body is only moving about in one part or another of this garden."

On another occasion she said, "This body has no need of doing or saying anything. There

was no such need before nor is there any now, nor will there be any afterwards. Whatever has been and is being manifested through this body are for the sake of 'you all. If you want to declare something as belonging particularly to this body, you may state that the whole universe is its own."

The infinite glories of divine creative activity that shine throughout the entire universe under the urge of the spirit of Motherhood, find expression in all the ways, in every word and action and in every thought of Sri Sri Ma. Fondly insisting on something before the devotees, like a small daughter or offering the boon of safety from danger like a mother to those seeking shelter in Her in distress, all these are but the working of the same Supreme Mother Power.

By maintaining the same regard and attachment to all the religions of the world, to all castes and creeds, to all stages of life, to all laws and types of education, She has demonstrated in Her own life the truth of the great text, "All this is but Brahma or the Absolute." Mother says, "All religions represent one course ; all paths lead to one ; we are all one." If any

one asks Her, "To what caste do you belong ? Where do you live ?" She replies with a laugh, "To speak in the manner of the world, this body belongs to East Bengal and is Brahmin by caste. But if you think apart from these artificial, discriminating attributes, you will discover that this body is a member of *one* family."

At times She has been heard to say, "Have faith in this body. Your whole-hearted faith will itself open your eyes." She also says sometimes, "This Body knows nothing. It, but speaks out what you put into its ears." Again at times She declares, "This body is but a doll. It plays exactly as you want it to play."

From utterances such as these, it becomes definitely obvious that in this body of Sri Sri Ma, the Power that lies hidden behind the phenomenal world has taken form. All Her activities emanate from the Supreme Power pervading the universe and also everything merges into Her. She is altogether without the sense of duality. She occasionally declares, "Either you alone are all or I alone am all."

On another occasion She said "I am really you. It is only because He exists that the notion of 'I' and 'you' originates". Whoever will say

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even once with a heart full of faith and reverence, "Come to me, O Mother mine, I cannot pass my days without you", verily indeed will Mother reveal Her true self to him and take him up on Her affectionate lap. Driven by distress, do not look upon Her as a mysterious refuge for the moment. Remember she is always present and very near to you like the very breath of your life. Once you do this, you will not have to do anything more. She will take full charge of you.

MOTHER

10

(*By Mrs. B. L. Jaspal, Lucknow.*

. *Translated by Kamala Jaspal, M.A.)*

What I am going to set down here may appear strange to some and raise a sceptical smile in them. I cannot blame them. All I can say is that they happen to be true and those who have had similar experiences or at least have been interested in such matters will understand and appreciate them.

It was in the year 1934 in December, a few days after Divali that I saw Mother for the first

time at the Ananda Chowk Temple, Dehradun. When I first cast my eyes on Her, I was struck by the simplicity of Her dress and by Her unique, unearthly expression. She was wearing a white Sari and on Her forehead was a broad vermilion mark. A peculiar light or effulgence seemed to radiate from Her eyes. There was no denying the fact that I had never seen such a personality before. She asked me three personal questions. I answered them to the best of my ability. Then abruptly She turned round and asked, "Can you see three people in your car?" I answered in the affirmative. She rose and got into the car and went for a drive towards Kalsi. In the meantime certain questions had arisen in my mind and I seized this opportunity to put them to Her. When we reached the Tea Gardens, I asked Mother where She came from. "This body," She said, "comes from Dacca." When I asked Her whether She was married, She replied "The husband of this body" is practising austerities at Uttarkasi." I had heard a number of stories about Mother. I had also heard that She had become one with God. Prompted by curiosity I asked Her point blank whether this was true. Straight came Her

reply, "God is within you too." When I told Her that I believed in Guru Nanak, She said "There is one railway station though the paths leading to it are many ; you are a single individual, yet some call you Mother, some aunt, and some sister. Similarly God is One but He has many names."

Such was my first meeting with Mother. I was profoundly impressed by what I had seen and heard. Mother's words stirred me strongly. I cannot convey the state of my mind on my way back from Her. Her words kept ringing in my ears and Her image and gestures floated before my mind's eye as I went about my daily tasks at home. Soon it became difficult to pass my days without seeing Her as often as I could. A few days later, She left for Risikes. Finding it impossible to stay without Her, I too followed Her there.

At Risikes, I witnessed a curious spectacle. One evening we were sitting inside a room. The light was failing. Suddenly I perceived that Mother began to sway from side to side at first gently, then with greater and greater vehemence. One could see that it was no ordinary movement. As She moved, mysterious words,—

fragments of a divine language in which one could catch sprinkling of a few Sanskrit words here and there—issued from Her lips. Her face, and indeed Her whole body seemed to have become transformed. I had never witnessed such a phenomenon. I felt very mystified and considerably awed at what I had seen.

This was only the beginning of a series of incidents for which it is difficult to find any explanation. Often when I had a question in my mind and before I could put it to Mother She would give the answer either directly or in course of a talk on some other topic. Once I had the idea that it would be very nice if Mother would give me a vermilion case. As soon as I came to Her and before I had any occasion to express my desire, She handed over to me Her vermilion case.

Such experiences were not peculiar to me but were shared by others also who came in contact with Her. Once, during the period I am writing about, an old Kasmiri lady (known later as Kausalya Mai) prepared some sweets (called Pattis) for Mother. But for some reason or other, She was unable to come to Mother in the day-time. As night came on,

She thought it was too late to go to Mother and She might, as well give up the idea of taking the sweets to Her. She then got ready to eat them herself. Immediately after, Mother turned up at her place in the company of Bhaiji and asked, "Where are my pattis? Please give them to me." One can imagine the confusion of the poor lady. But Mother consoled her though there was a good deal of merriment at her expense.

Once I was struck by the unusual tallness of Mother's stature. She seemed to have suddenly grown much taller than She actually is and I was puzzled. A few days later Mother explained it thus—"When *Kriyas* or Yogic exercises take place in the body, then it undergoes much change; it may become taller. This becomes particularly noticeable when such a person happens to stand or move about."

I had another similar experience a few years later. I was staying with Mother at Hardwar with Bholanathji. Mother was having high temperature at that time. Bholanathji went to call a doctor. When the doctor arrived, a curious spectacle met our gaze. Mother's body was passing through various changes:—Her

legs were on Her shoulders and the other limbs were disposed in an odd manner. After that, various Asans and Pranayams and other Yogic postures and exercises were assumed, one after another, automatically. The doctor at first was somewhat taken aback but was afterwards visibly impressed.

On another occasion we had gone for a walk at Risikes. We came across a Gurudwara (Sikh Temple). Mother straight away went inside and stood under Guru Nanak's picture. I did not know why; but I had the immediate conviction that as Mother stood there, she was saying to me, "Look, even Guru Nanak used to tell a rosary." In those days, I never used a rosary in spite of the scriptural injunctions. Some days later I saw Mother in the form of Guru Nanak standing beside me at 4 A.M. in the morning. This happened four days in succession. Again at Bindhyachal I once saw Mother in the form of Guru Gobinda Singhji.

Once when my husband lay on sickbed at Lucknow, Mother came to our place in a car and said to my husband "Pitaji (father) complete your work because the time has come." She

repeated the warning on several occasions. Shortly after my husband died.

After my husband's death, when sometimes I would be overcome with worries and distress, I often had the irresistible feeling that he was near Mother. Shortly after when I was returning to Dehradun, I was alone in my compartment. I felt I had again that curious and overwhelming conviction that Mother was accompanying me in the compartment.

But enough of such phenomena, all true and highly impressive ones to me, as they were. Let no one suppose that our experiences with Mother were all of this nature. Sometimes She would be playful, joking and laughing with us all. On occasions She would instruct us about Sanyamvrata or the practice of purity and self-control viz. to speak the truth, abstain from dishes tempting to the palate, to observe fast once a week and so on.

But what drew us irresistibly to Her, was Her love and kindness far surpassing that of our near and dear friends and relatives. Sometimes it left me in tears however much I tried to check myself. I would feel on seeing Mother as a child when united to its mother after a long

separation. I would run to Her whenever I got an opportunity, even though I thereby sometimes incurred the displeasure of my husband, I had no want in the world yet I yearned for Mother; I cannot explain why. My husband would ask me, "Tell me how you feel when you are with Mother". I could not express myself and I would reply in desperation, "Ask a lover of wine how it tastes. Just as he cannot adequately convey his sensation, so I cannot express my feelings about Mother."

I have seen Mother in many moods and in many divine forms on different occasions. I have been gradually led to the conclusion that She is the essence of all things and all things begin, live and thrive in Her. Outwardly She is a woman whose sweet voice enchants people. She can send people into convulsions of laughter with Her humorous remarks. She can stir people to their depths, induce exalted moods and experiences in them. But one feels that Mother stands beyond all these manifestations and activities and there is something far more profound, superhuman in Her; call it what you will, a divine force, an Absolute Principle. But when we are in no mood to probe into these higher

mysteries, it is enough for us to feel that She is our Mother whose all-embracing love perpetually surrounds us inspite of our failings and is guiding us to our Eternal Good.

11

THE TRUTH BEHIND ANANDAMAYI

BY

Barindra Kumar Ghose

Mother Anandamayi is Divine Love and Bliss incarnate in human form. There are some rare beings who are not born like ordinary men with limited mental and vital capacities like a closed field of ignorance. They are moulded rather with the stuff of the supramental and cosmic regions, born with the doors of their being wide open towards the vastness of the Infinite. They, the makers and precursors of a New Age, have not to strive hard to free themselves, like us, from the iron shackles of matter and its rigid 'dharma' or laws; as they belong not only in essence but partly in substance too, to the higher hemisphere of pure light, power and bliss.

Such men and women of wider vision and occult knowledge are to be found even in the western countries though they are rare. The fact is that the West being materialistic in its views is wedded to the so called realism. Great progress achieved in the realms of material science has stressed this view-point there and discouraged the awakening of the subtler and higher faculties of man. In the East it is different. The East is by nature, culture and tradition, meditative, inward and intuitive. So here the higher and truer and more comprehensive Science of the Spirit has been studied for ages ; and deeper and deeper researches made, probing behind matter and this material manifestation. The call in the East is more to be introspective and God-centred than materialistic and self-centred ; to transcend matter and live this life from the soul's bliss-steeped oneness, its lit-up heights and wide infinitude ; and from there into its rich and harmonised multiplicity in manifestation. So in the East many souls are born with wider faculties of truth-vision and miraculous powers.

Man must transcend his small restless ego and its petty desires and futile strivings. He

must raise himself above this plane of division and ignorance into the cosmic oneness where alone lies the key to harmony of this clash of apparently irreconcilable dualities. Truth-poised beings like Mother Anandamayi and Sri Aurobindo are the natural guides to these inaccessible heights, into the deep mysteries behind creation. So in the East is to be sought more or less that key to the harmony born of the spirit, which alone can heal humanity of its ills, and reconcile all clash and hatred, all irreconcilable factors in man's life and help to lay a sounder basis for a perfect civilisation.

How to know and discern a rare psychic being like Mother Anandamayi and come in intimate touch with Her? To a man of ordinary superficial vision She is just like you and me, an ordinary mortal of flesh and blood. Yes, these children of light are elusive and difficult to know, as spiritual greatness is not a visible material phenomenon. The splendour of the multi-coloured dawn and the deep underlying beauty behind the snow-capped Himalayas or the inimitable grace and loveliness of a full-blown lotus are equally lost upon a worldly man, as if they never existed. Only a Rabindra-

nath is fully awake to these glories ; he alone can lift the veil and usher you into a heaven of melody and beauty so long closed and unknown to you. But in the world of spirit, while these rare spiritual souls can, if they wish, give us a glimpse into the ineffable Bliss and Peace of the Great Beyond, alas, there are no obvious means or method to enable the ordinary mortal to discover and appreciate the grandeur and glory of these great spirits themselves, unless they, of their own accord, choose to reveal themselves. But some indications there are. A spirit-poised being like Mother can be known among other things, by Her impersonality. When you meet Her She is not very much there in the body like any other man. If you have a little intuitive vision, you easily feel Her to be mostly elsewhere, like the wide dome of the blue above you, perceived and yet not fully grasped. You stand in awe and baffled before something vast, incomprehensible, reaching up to unmapped stretches and unmeasured heights and depths. Mere power in great men of action, or a volcano in eruption, or a tornado in movement stupefies us. But trance-poised beings of spiritual greatness with infinitely more, nay, illimitable power,

held in static calm, are cradled in ineffable peace and Divine Bliss, and yet are benignly active. Here rock-like calm stands harmonised with irresistible movement; in fact all aspects of truth, terrible and benign, good and evil, poison and nectar have somehow become synthesised in them. Here in such rare beings, the unique seer-vision of India has achieved the great integral synthesis of cosmic principles, the true Godhead of all Gods.

Mother Anandamayi is a form put forth by the Divine Energy; She is Her very own epitome; Her emanation and blossoming in matter thus providing the infinite capacity of the human vehicle to embody and manifest the multiple Godhead of the Divine Siva immanent in creation.

Mother—As I Saw Her and Her Message to the World

Sobharani Basu, M.A.

I had been hearing about Mother Anandamayi and Her wonderful spiritual life ever since my early days, but there never had been so far an opportunity to come into actual contact with Her or to have the privilege of a personal talk with Her. It will not be out of place to mention here that very early in my life I had become acquainted with the holy personality of Sri Sri Ramakrishna. His life and teachings had seized my ardent youthful imagination and left a profound and lasting impression on me. How I longed for a contact with a similar living personality of actual flesh and blood in whom I could find refuge and from whom I could draw inspiration not only in moments of distress but throughout my life ! To satisfy this longing of my heart, I eagerly sought out several saintly personalities and frequented their company whenever I could.

Sometime ago when I was engaged upon a specialised study of contemporary Indian mysticism, I happened to be at Benares and met Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Gopi Nath Kaviraj, the celebrated scholar. He advised me to go and see Mother Anandamayi adding that an actual contact with a great living mystic and inspiring personality like Mother, would certainly prove to be of invaluable help to me not only in the work I had undertaken, but in my life as well.

The prospect of having a "Darsan" of Mother was an alluring one and I lost no time in trying to seek Her out. I was told that She was staying on a boat in one of the ghats at Benares, but when I reached there I found that She had moved to a spot near the Imlighat, Bhadaini, where the Benares Asram now stands. The site had been newly acquired and on the particular day I went there, I found a function in progress celebrating the laying of the foundation of the Asram. There was a large gathering and in one corner of the crowded compound, a band of young men was engaged in Kirtan surrounded by a group of *Bhaktas* listening with rapt devotion. I looked about eagerly to have my

first glimpse of the great personality, for whose sake I had come there. My eyes fell on a delicate figure of extraordinary sanctity and tenderness standing at a little distance. From the expression on Her face and Her general demeanour I at once guessed, nay, I was almost certain, that She was the Mother although, nobody had pointed Her out to me. The day was drawing to its close, and as I looked at Her through the uncertain twilight, investing everything with its unearthly glamour, I thought, I was in the presence of the Universal Mother descended in our midst in concrete human form. Her face with its radiant smile and extraordinary sweetness made an unforgettable impression on one's mind. Motherly solicitude was writ large on it, being but the visible expression of that transcendent love and compassion which is always associated with motherhood. She stood robed in plain white, with dishevelled hair, but through this simplicity, the charm of Her divine personality shone unmistakably.

Mother moved about for a little while and then took Her seat facing the Kirtan party probably to encourage them with Her presence.

She beckoned to me, and I approached. I bowed down to Her. Though no words were exchanged, my heart was more than satisfied with Her mere '*darsan*' and presence." I felt that one of the long cherished yearnings of my heart had been fulfilled at long last. My heart was so full that even if I had the opportunity to talk with Her, I believe I would not have been able to say anything at that moment. Nor was any talk necessary. The silence was more eloquent than any words could have been.

My second meeting with Mother was exactly a year later when She was staying in Birla's Dharmasala, Sarnath. I spent with Her an entire day and brought away treasures of many sweet recollections. Thereafter I met Her several times at the Benares Asram. In fact I always make a point of seeing Her whenever She comes to Benares. She has become a real Mother to me treating me with an affection and motherly solicitude which no words can convey. I had many opportunities to listen to Her inspiring talks, from which I present below the gist of some of Her teachings. I have tried my best to preserve faithfully the simplicity of Her expression.

We should all live as far as possible in the consciousness of God. We should also acquire the habit of taking constantly God's Divine name. It is all-powerful. Supreme peace, freedom and power, all flow from it. Even if the right Guru (spiritual guide) has not been found, there is no harm. For the name of God is all-powerful and has its own peculiar virtue. Its effects are certain and though not immediately noticeable, they must come in course of time.

Simple faith has great power in bringing about the spiritual regeneration of man. If a man has faith, he has nothing to fear, for all things will come to him. Simple faith may be blind, but it is potent and highly efficacious. If a man's faith is sincere and in his simplicity, a wrong mantra is followed and repeated by a devotee—not realising that his mantra is not suited to his nature and may even do him harm—he will not have to suffer any evil consequence thereby. For he will be under the protection of the Divine who will see to his mantra being corrected and the seeker after truth directed along the proper path. The Divine always responds to sincere faith and disposes everything accordingly.

People should not be carried away by the alluring prospect of seeing visions and hearing voices (*Bani*). These have their uses no doubt, but a true seeker ought to be able to know their real worth and take them for what they are. Real vision is that which satisfies one's thirst for vision for ever; so also with hearing voices and other such phenomena. We should therefore be always on our guard against attaching too much importance to visions etc. which are, after all, external affairs at their best. On the attainment of Truth all desires for visions etc. vanish altogether. Those who have the privilege of being under the guidance of a *Guru*, should surrender themselves absolutely to his will. One-pointed devotion and singleness of aim are the means for surrender. In addition, constant meditation, repetition of Holy Name and singing of the glories thereof are also helpful.

It is desirable to consider oneself as a mere tool in the hands of the *Guru*. One should not look forward to a particular spiritual condition, for what is to happen will happen by itself through God's will. Nobody will be able to resist it. The practice of surrender may not be very pleasant in the beginning and one is likely

to fret under restrictions but it has to be borne patiently.

Following the natural course is the best. A man should be led along the path which is in harmony with his tastes, capacities and predilections. There is no room for pressure or coercion in spiritual education. Everyone should be allowed to develop himself in an atmosphere of freedom untrammelled by artificial conventions and contradictory suggestions.

It is in the fitness of things that one who has not realised the Joy of Truth should find his mind wandering here and there. That the mind should be unsteady and restless is only natural. What is known as *Sadhana* or spiritual discipline is nothing but various methods and devices to achieve control of the mind. This disciplinary course includes *Japa* or repetition of God's name, discussion of religious topics, systematic study of sacred literature, meditation and similiar other practices. Every man should devote as much time as he can, to that practice which is congenial to his nature.

Worldly men should regard the world as a stage on which they are required to play their part. They should always remember that it is

merely a halting stage in the journey of life rather than a permanent resting place. Some people forget this simple truth and become engrossed in worldly preoccupations to such an extent that they come to regard the world as if it were their permanent abode. This attitude should be changed altogether. Spiritual seekers, however, should try to keep their inner attitude concealed and move about in the world like worldly people. In this connection it may be pointed out that it is also possible to convert the world with all its diverse elements into a kingdom of purity and happiness. It is possible, for instance, to regard one's parents as God the Father and God the Mother, one's husband as the Lord of the Universe, and to look upon one's children as child Krishna or Gopal or child Parvati. In such a world all persons known and unknown are connected with one another and with the *sadhaka* by certain ties of personal relationship. If this process of mental transformation and change of attitude implied in it, be continued for some length of time, it will change his entire personality and lead him nearer to his goal.

It is necessary to impart religious education to children. Parents, guardians, and the higher

authorities of educational institutions are ultimately responsible for moulding the life and character of the children in their charge. This education need not be exclusively the only education provided, but should be the foundation for the educational structure.*

One should bear up patiently under all circumstances knowing that suffering is the necessary accompaniment of physical existence and that the more one suffers in the present, the less will one be liable to suffer in future. Suffering when it reaches the extreme point, is followed by peace and tranquillity.

If there is a real craving for God in the heart, there is no reason for despondency. A person may think that inspite of his best efforts to lead a pious life, he is unsuccessful and is unable to make satisfactory progress ; he is apt to regard his life as a failure. But this sense of failure itself is an indication that some good has been achieved. Even if one's thoughts are directed to the Divine for a single moment, it is not to be regarded as of little consequence.

* The Vidyapith founded in Dehra Dun in Mother's name is intended to serve as an institution of this kind.

GLIMPSES OF MOTHER'S LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

Vidyakut is a famous village in the Brahmanbaria Sub-Division of the Tippera District in Bengal. The Kasyapa Brahmins of the village are highly respectable and have always had a great reputation both in the sphere of learning and of religion. Bepin Behari Bhattacharyya of this village lived for some years in the neighbouring village of Kheora where he had inherited some property. Here did his wife Mokshada Sundari Devi give birth to a daughter at 3 A.M. on the 30th April, 1896 and to this daughter, who is the subject of this life sketch, the parents gave the name of Nirmala Sundari. Her present name, Sri Sri Anandamayī, was given to Her by that Prince of *Bhaktas*, Jyotish Chandra Roy, I.S.O. affectionately called Bhaiji by all the devotees of mother.

Mother Anandamayī is the second child of Her parents. Their first child was a girl, who died soon after her birth. So the day after Mother was born, Her mother took Her to a Tulsi plant and placing Her at its foot rolled

Her to and fro on the ground*. This was done every day till She was 18 months old, after which Mother Herself would go and roll there.

Mother did not cry, as ordinary babies do, immediately after birth. She remained absolutely quiet. Years after, when there was some talk on this subject, She disclosed, "Why should I cry? I was then peeping at the Mango tree through the crevices in the bamboo fencing." She also said, "On the 13th day after the birth of this body,† Nandan Chakrabarty came to see it; isn't it so?" This was confirmed by Her mother who came to recollect it.

From Her childhood, when listening to *Kirtan*, Mother would exhibit in Her person manifestations of *Bhavas*, extraordinary raptures and divine ecstasies. She said, "When *Kirtan* would be heard even from afar, many unusual manifestations of *Bhavas* (ecstasies) would appear in this body. Owing to the darkness of the room, it would pass unnoticed by its

* The sacred Basil, held in veneration by the Hindus. The idea was to propitiate the deity and avert any evil such as premature death by dedicating the child to the sacred *Tulsi*.

† Mother generally does not use the expression "I", "Me", "My", etc. but refers to Herself as "this body."

parents. Moreover there was this sort of feeling also in this body that nobody should notice these manifestations. Probably that is why they remained unnoticed." Later on, when She would be seized by these trances during *Kirtan*, Mother used to remark, "Just as at present these peculiar *Bhavas* appear during *Kirtan*, so did they manifest themselves in childhood also. Probably the time was not then ripe. So they did not come to light."

Even as a child mother used to see the forms of gods and goddesses. Once, when She was five or six years old, She was taken to a festival held in honour of Lord Siva at Chanla. There She was left seated at the door of the temple while the relative who had brought Her to the festival went to have a look round. Mother told Her mother later, "When I was left seated there at the door, I saw Siva come out of the stone *lingam* and begin dancing. He danced quite a long while." When the relative returned and spoke to Her, Mother says, Siva stopped dancing and re-entered the stone image. In Her childhood, Mother says, She used to remain most of the time in a mood of abstraction. Even at meal time, She looked

like one quite unconcerned. So it sometimes happened that when feeding Her, Her mother would get annoyed and would give Her a shake and reproach Her, saying, "Even at your meals you are absent-minded, always gazing upwards." Mother says, "At that time, however, nothing was spoken about this, but now all this is being told. This body used to see then forms of many gods and goddesses coming and going." Her mother unable to understand Her state of mental aloofness and detachment from things of the world, would call Her "simpleton, dullard and so on."

Mother had practically no education. She attended for a short while the village Pathshala (the old style private village primary school). She learnt the Bengali alphabet in two days. Mother says that She did not read much but could give correct replies at lesson time. We learn from Her mother that owing to limited means, no new books or slate could be purchased for Her, so She was given an old and used copy of a book and a piece of broken slate. She adds that Mother was rather indifferent to Her studies; She however, went to school when asked to do so. Shortly after being promoted to the lower primary class Her studies had to be

discontinued for various reasons. Mother could write a neat though rather unsteady hand. Specimens of Her writing are given in Bhaiji's Bengali *Matridarsan** and also in Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Vol I†. Mother does not write now and when requested to do so, Her usual reply is, "There is no 'Kheyal'‡ to do so now."

She was married to late Ramani Mohan Chakrabarty of village Atpara in the district of Dacca. Her husband, who came to be known later on as Bholanath, was then serving in the Police Department; but shortly after his marriage, he found himself without a job. After marriage, Mother stayed for about four years with Her husband's elder brother late Revati Mohan Chakrabarty who was a railway Station Master and was posted at Sripur, Narundi and at other places on the East Bengal Railway. At these places also Mother would occasionally pass into a state of trance but no one knew anything about it. Sometimes

* P. 117, a letter of 7 or 8 lines written in 1930 at the request of some devotees containing religious exhortation.

† By Srimati Gurupriya Devi. A three page transcription of some old popular verses containing the Hundred names of Sri Krishna.

‡ "Kheyal"—a disposition to do a particular thing.

while cooking, She would pass into that condition. Her sister-in-law (wife of Her husband's elder brother) and others used to think that She had slept too much. Sometimes it so happened that during Her trance (भावावेश) things would go wrong when Her sister-in-law would come and scold Her, but Mother would not take the slightest notice of it. From the expression of Her face, it would seem that the remarks might have been as well addressed to the wall. The elder brother of Her husband, however, treated Her with affection. Mother had to do practically the entire work of the household. Her neighbours, it is said, would occasionally come and cleanse Her utensils or crush the spices into paste to be used in cooking. They used to help Mother in Her work very secretly, lest they should incur the displeasure of Her sister-in-law. For instance, they would pass the prepared spice paste through some opening in the bamboo wall and leave it there. Such incidents clearly show how dearly they loved Mother; the more so, because She herself did hardly anything in particular for them. It must have been the spell of Her supernatural fascination, instances of which we come across

again and again in Her life, that made them so eager to do all they could for Her.

At the close of the year 1911 the elder brother of Mother's husband died at Narundi. After this She came to Atpara and stayed with Her elder sister-in-law for 6 months. At this time Her husband Bholanath got a job at Astagram in the Settlement Department of the estate of the Nawab of Dacca. Then Mother went from Atpara to Her father's place at Vidyakut and stayed there for some time. In May, 1913, Bholanath brought Her over to Astagram. At this time She was a little over 17 years old. At Astagram, noticing the unusual cleanliness and tidiness of the surroundings of the sacred Tulsi plant in Mother's compound, Hara Kumar Roy, who may be said to have been Her first devotee, arranged to have a '*Kirtan*' there. Mother did not talk with Hara Kumar at that time as it is not customary for a young married girl in a Hindu family to talk with male strangers and particularly with male members of her husband's village. Yet the latter spared no efforts to see that She was not put to inconvenience or trouble in any way. He used to help Her a great deal in many ways.

One day he said to Her, "To-day I am the only person to call you mother ; but know this, a day will come when the whole world will call you mother. Nobody has yet recognised you" Mother was only 18 at that time. Hara Kumar's prophecy has proved true. We have heard from Mother that Hara Kumar was a very pious and simple person. He was a great lover of *Nam-kirtan* (singing the name of God) and used to take part in it enthusiastically.

It was during Her stay at Astagram that Mother's *Bhavas* (ecstatic moods) came first to the notice of the outside world. Once during *Kirtan* by Srijut Gagan Roy, a neighbour, Mother went into *Bhava*. Later also on another occasion She had similar manifestations in Her person. Many people now came to know of it and began to visit Her and pay their respects to Her. It will not be out of place to give here a brief account of Mother's *Bhavas* or ecstatic states at Astagram, Bajitpur and later at Sahbag (Dacca) and other places as told by Her and also narrated by people who witnessed these phenomena.

As the sound of *Kirtan* would reach Her, She would generally drop whatever work She might

be doing and gradually Her body stiffened and fell on the ground. She would remain in this condition for varying periods. Afterwards or at times, She would stand erect resting only on the big toe or only on the fore part of Her feet, with both hands raised above Her head, Her eyes fixed steadily ahead without even a flicker of the eyelids. Sometimes Her head would bend backwards till it touched Her back. She would either stand there absolutely still and motionless or sway rhythmically with the heaving of Her breath. Often She would run dancing to the spot where *Kirtan* was being sung, sometimes very gracefully undulating like a wave, and sometimes with incredible swiftness. Her movements then would be quick like a flash of lightning, almost impossible to be followed even by the most alert eye. Frequently She would roll in ecstasy to and fro on the ground in a whirl over a distance of 15 or 20 yards like a dry leaf driven before a storm. It was impossible to stop Her at such moments. She who was usually so modest and never unveiled Her face before strangers would now run and dance bareheaded, entirely oblivious of the external world.*

* Vide *Matri Darsan* pp. 39-41.

There were occasions when Her body would stretch and become much taller than usual ; or again it would shrink into an inconceivably small size. At times it would become rolled up like a round mass of flesh as if there were no bones. Sometimes the entire body would so throb and thrill with strong emotions surging through it that it would get swollen and red, with every single hair standing on end. She would sometimes shed profuse tears or laugh and become stiff as if in a stupor. There was, in short, no end to the varieties of *Bhavas* and their expressions induced in Her by the chanting of God's holy name at *Kirtan*.*

To return to our narrative. Mother was at first in good health during Her stay at Astagram but later there were occasional set-backs. She then went to Her father's place at Vidyakut and stayed there for 2 years 8 months. Bholanath stayed on at Astagram.

In January 1918, Bholanath was transferred to Bajitpur. Mother left Vidyakut and came to Bajitpur (via Atpara) where She stayed for several years. It was at Bajitpur that

* Ibid p. 42.

various kinds of spiritual manifestation,—*Yogic* processes and activities, including control of physical senses and breath, *Asanas* (physical postures), *Mudras* (gestures and manipulations of hands and fingers), *Japa* (the repetition of God's name and mantras), etc. appeared in Mother. She says that the various types of *Sadhana* that were manifested in Her body were beyond reckoning. We have heard some account of these from Mother Herself on different occasions. An account of some of these will be found in "Matri-Darsan," Chap. IV.

In this connection we reproduce below what Mother said about Her Diksa (initiation) in course of a conversation in 1945.

A devotee asked Her, "It is said that you had your initiation on *Jhulan Purnima* day (about the month of August). So far as we know the various spiritual *Sadhanas* and experiences took place in your body spontaneously and that you had no *Guru* (spiritual guide)."

Mother said, "You are right. To say that this body had Diksa has no meaning. You need not accept it. It was like this,—the father of this body used to repeat the name of Hari. There

was some talk with him about it. This body asked him, 'What is the use of repeating the name of Hari?' He explained. Later on when the *Kheyal* for *Sadhana* came to this body, it used to repeat the name of Hari. Afterwards when the various *Kriyas* or spiritual exercises spontaneously manifested themselves in this body Bholanath became frightened and said, 'We are Saktas (worshippers of Sakti, i.e. the supreme Power as Goddess) and Saivas (worshippers of Lord Siva). What is all this you are doing, repeating the name of Hari or Lord Vishnu? I do not think it right or proper.' Then this body asked him, 'What then should this body do? Should it repeat *Jai Siva Sankara, Bam Bam Hara Hara*?' (Praises of Lord Siva). He said 'Yes, you may do that'; so this was started; but even then those *Kriyas* (spiritual processes) did not cease; on the contrary they became intensified. As soon as the household work was over, this body would pass into a peculiar state and as soon as it took its seat those *Kriyas* would start spontaneously. And how beautifully they would come about! As the power of ordinary will had no part in it, everything functioned

admirably well under direction of the Supreme Will. The *Asanas* (yogic postures) were gone through daily. As soon as the idea dawned that they should be done in a particular way, this body would remain absolutely quiet for some time, after which the various *Kriyas*, *Asanas*, etc. would start afresh of themselves.

"Do you know how it all functioned? Just as has been observed in Tata's factories,—the various machines were all working automatically, there being no one to guide them. And listen further. On a particular *Jhulan Purnima* night, this body had taken its seat as it used to do every night after the meals were over and everything for Bholanath had been attended to. He used to watch these *Kriyas* as he smoked his *hooka*, sitting on his bed, thrusting his head out of the mosquito curtain, till he would fall asleep. This night too, he had fallen asleep while watching.

"But do you know what happened to this body that night? All the articles of worship were arranged, visibly though nothing had been procured from outside as is usually done.

Then the *Yajñasthali** was made and various *Yantras*† were also drawn thereon. The particular *Bija*‡ was inscribed and the sacred fire lighted on a small 'scale. Then the *Bija-Mantra*§ emanating from within became revealed and was inscribed on the *Yajñasthali*, and similar other things were all done.

'Oblations, etc. were offered to the fire according to the rules; the *Japa* was also performed as required. The various objects and articles of *Puja* were as visible to this body as yours are to you."

Somebody interjected at this stage, "Well Mother, could Bholanath see those articles of *Puja*, the sacrificial platform etc.?" Mother replied, "No, unless one has special vision, one cannot see them. But if God wills they too, may be seen. Now listen further, the *Puja* was continued in this manner, the *Arghya*|| was offered to the Sun. In the meantime the *Pranava* ("OM").

* An elevated platform in the shape of a square with sand spread over it a few inches thick.

† Mystic diagrams of various shapes.

‡ Mystic word or syllable.

§ Mystic sound representing a particular deity.

|| Offering of water, rice, flowers, grass blades, etc.

arose from within. But then it occurred to this body that the mother of this body had said that women should not utter OM. At once the *Pranava* sound ceased. It subsequently forced itself out from within and found expression. After this *Japa* started. At first the fingers stretched themselves and became still. This body was watching and admiring. Then slowly the fingers curved and attached themselves to the proper positions for *Japa*. Now also as a suggestion arose in the mind that it should be done in a particular way there was confusion. But when again the conscious attempt was given up and the body waited quietly, it all went on slowly and correctly. Only the names of God were so long repeated but now *Bija Mantras* followed. Ceaselessly they would vibrate at the throat; even the very sound *tak-tak* of *Japa* at the spine would be audible as starting from the region of the throat.

"After this (*Diksa*), whenever a query arose what this body was doing, it would reply it was engaged in *Sandhya* (morning, noon and evening prayers which only the initiated person is entitled to do). Formerly this

expression was not used. It is true that before this also various spiritual manifestations and activities were occurring in this body. This (Diksa) was also just one of them."

Though this is an account of incidents of one night only, it gives us a fair idea of the manner and the varieties of *Kriya* and *Sadhana* that manifested themselves in Her body. Everything would happen automatically. The least attempt to assert the will would interrupt the spontaneous flow.

About Her *Puja*, we learn that, for a few months during this period various gods and goddesses appeared in Her and were worshipped in Her own way. One deity would issue out of Her body, complete with all associates and after worship would merge into Her body; another would next turn up. There would be no material of worship. She would feel at the time of worship that She was Herself the god, the worshipper, the mantra, the articles of *Puja* and everything. All the various processes involved in the *Puja* would work out automatically. It has been ascertained from persons well versed in the *Sastric* practices that Her *Pujas* were all performed in strict

accordance with the rules of the *Sastras* down to the minutest detail.

This is equally true of Her *Yogic* practices, *Asanas*, *Mudras*, *Pranayama* etc. Though they began early during Her stay at Bajitpur, they continued for a long time. Fortunate witnesses describe strange contortions of Her body during the automatic processes of *Asanas*, *Pranayamas* etc. when Her breathing sometimes became hurried, slow or stopped altogether. She once drew a sketch of the *Sat-Chakras* or the six solar plexuses or vital centres in the human body and accurately described the position, structure and function of each. These were found to agree in every detail with the account given in our *Yogic* treatises. Hearing this Mother said, "I have never read or heard about these (*Chakras*) before; when at first the *Bijas* manifested themselves in the body there was some surprise. I enquired, 'What are these?' At once a clear answer about each of them emanated from the lips and the physical mind perceived distinctly the position and details of each. I then saw them as vividly as shown in the pictures in Woodroff's *Serpent Power*."*

* For details see *Matri Darsan* P. 58.

During this period, when various *Sadhanas* were manifested in Mother, a peculiar radiance would sometimes be observed emanating from Her body. Mother used to keep Herself covered up with clothes at such times. Cases had occurred of persons losing their consciousness by touching Her body then inadvertently. Sometimes even the spot where Mother used to sit or lie down would be 'hot like fire'.

Mother used to take very little food during this period. She habitually eats but little, but during this period the quantity of Her food was surprisingly small and the manner of Her eating was extraordinary. When the *Sadhanas* were being manifested in Her, She used to take food only at the end of Her *Kriyas* almost when the night was over. She also spent 8 or 9 months taking only three morsels by day and three morsels at night. At another time for 5 or 6 months She took only three grains of rice twice a day. For some time She lived only on a small fruit and a little water. Later also She ate incredibly small quantities. At Dacca and other places, when She had given up eating with Her own hands, She used to take twice daily only as much food as could be picked up

with two fingers or again what could be fed Her by Her attendant in one breath. Sometimes Her lips would only be touched with food. Occasionally She would go absolutely without any food or drink for days together. Yet these privations did not seem to make any difference in Her health or appearance. She remained perfectly cheerful and radiant.*

It is interesting to learn in this connection that when Mother gave up taking rice altogether for some time, She could not even recognise it (rice) afterwards. Seeing a maid servant taking rice, She looked on with wonder and curiosity and insisted like a child on having some of it. When refused, She started crying. Mother declared later, "People have to make some effort to renounce, but in the case of this body, everything is reversed. It seeks to keep up old habits. You should therefore make it a point to feed this body with three grains of rice daily otherwise the habit of eating rice would cease altogether just like the use of my hand for taking food".†

* Matri Darsan P. 84-85.

† For details see Matri Darsan pp. 85-86.

While we are on this topic, we might mention that Mother would sometimes eat unusually large quantities of food without suffering any ill consequence. There was an occasion when, after living for a certain period on one chittack (two ounces) of rice and pulse cooked over sacrificial fire, one day She ate as much as would have sufficed for 8 or 9 people. Once She took 60 or 70 *puris* with corresponding amount of dal, vegetables etc. On a different occasion She took sweetmeats made out of half a maund of milk and insisted on taking more like a child.*

During the latter part of Her stay at Bajitpur, Mother entered upon a period of silence which lasted for three years. If She spoke at all, She would do so after drawing a circle ' (*kundali*) round Her seat with fingers. There was nothing fixed or certain about the time or place when the circle would be drawn.

Mother's life at Astagram and Bajitpur was crowded with strange phenomena and incidents, of which we know but very little. Even of those that are known, we have space for a few only here.

* Ibid p. 51.

Diksa (initiation) of Bholanath took place, during this period. Mother, had informed Bholanath that his initiation would take place on the 15th Agradhayan, 1329, Bengali year, (about 1922), specifying the day of the week and of the lunar month (*tithi*). When the day arrived, Bholanath went away deliberately to his office to test Mother. When the actual time approached, She sent word to him in his office that he should come immediately, otherwise She Herself would turn up at the office. Knowing Mother's ways well, Bholanath hurried back home in all haste lest She would actually arrive at the office. Mother then asked Bholanath to take his bath and the various processes of *Diksa* were subsequently gone through. It may be added that Bholanath was the only person who received *Diksa* in this manner from Mother.

Another interesting phenomenon observed in this period was that shortly after Mother's *Diksa* took place as described before, various hymns in a language resembling Sanskrit or similar inspired speech would spontaneously gush out when She would pass into trance. Attempts to take them down met with no success

as they were uttered with great rapidity and the listeners were not acquainted with the language. A few of these inspired *Stotras* of Mother are given in Bhaiji's "Matri Darsan" † from which we reproduce only one here.

एहि भावनायं भायं एहि यं सं तानि तायं
भावमयं भवभयहरणं हे ।

यस्मिं स्त्वहं भाग पौं हं वां ह्रीं आं हे
भां हां हिं ह्रीं हं हीं वं लं यं सं त्वं

तादरौ भाग सं वं लं हे देव भक्तमयं मम हे ।

स त्वं हि हं यं वं वायं कं भावभक्ति * * * भावमयं हे ।

महात्मायं भवभयं हर हे ।

दैवतं मयं मे सं तं ह्रीं मत्तस्त्वम् भवोऽयं

यस्तानि त्वं तारणमयम् भवभयनाशं भावय हे ।

स्वभाव शरणगतं प्रणवजासनं ।

भवानीभवं भवभयनाशनं हे,

हर-शरणागतं * * तायं विभावतः ममायनं हे ।

यस्तारणं तत्तद्वयरूपं मया हि सर्वानि स्वरूपमयानि

मया हि सर्वः मया हि सर्वं शरणं हे ।

दास नित्यं * * प्रणवश्रुतकारणं

महामाया महाभावमय मयहे ।

† Matri Darsan pp. 48-49.

मम भो भक्तौ तरणं मा मम सर्व्वमयं हे
 'यस्यारुद्र रुद्रत्वं प्रणवे रां ऋ' कृतकृरणं रुद्रं नौमि ।
 प्रां वां हां सां आं हिं अं
 भावमयं हे * * * संसृष्टः केशवः ।*

"Thou art the Light of the universe and its controlling and guiding Spirit. Do thou appear in our midst. From Thee a cobweb of worlds is spreading out in all directions at very moment. Thou art the dispeller of all fears; do Thou appear before us! Thou art the seed of the universe; Thou art the Being in whom I reside. Thou art present in the heart of all *bhaktas*. Do Thou whom I find present before me, banish the fears of all beings. Thou art the embodiment of all gods and much more. Thou hast come out of me. I am the epitome of the created world. Let us contemplate upon the Foundation of all creation through whom every being in the world seeks liberation. Thou standest upon Thy own eternal basic nature. Thou hast come out of the *Pranava* (प्रणवः) the seed-word and the basis of all existence; the truths

* Matri Darsan P. 49, Revealed on the 20th Baisakh 1886 Beng. era.

of all the three Vedas are but tiny sparks from Thy eternal Light. Thou dost symbolise the heavenly couple, *Kama* and *Kameswari* who are dissolved together in all-permeating Bliss Supreme, and signified by *nada* and *bindu* when differentiated for keeping up Thy Lila. Do thou dispel the fears of the world !

"I seek refuge in Thee. Thou art my shelter and resting-place. Draw Thou my whole being into Thine. As the deliverer Thou dost appear in two forms, the liberator and the devotee seeking liberation. By Me alone are all created in My own image ; by Me are all sent into the world and in Me all find final refuge. I am the final cause indicated by the *Pranava* in the *Vedas*. I am *Mahamaya* and *Mahabhava* all in one. Devotion to Me is the cause of *moksa* (मोक्ष). All are Mine. From Me Rudra (रुद्रः) owes all his powers and the self-same I sing to the glory of Rudra when He becomes manifest in all actions and in their causes."*

These are admitted to be imperfect records. But scholars of Vedic language who have seen

* From the English Translation of *Matri Darsan* by G. C. Dasgupta (in the press).

them, say that part of their language is early Vedic Sanskrit with *Bijas* predominating. Their purport, as far as could be made out, is singing the glories of the supreme Power and offering prayers for His grace. Even now, on some occasions, such hymns issue from mother's lips in the state of *Bhava*.

While dealing with the life of Mother at Bajitpur, we have taken the opportunity to narrate some of Her *Sadhanas* etc. there and at Sahbag in Dacca. It was but natural that these *Sadhanas* and *Yogic* practices should appear extraordinary to people when they came to be known and talked about in the locality. People held all sorts of opinion about them ; some had doubts about the genuineness and sincerity of these manifestations. For example, S. Bhudev Basu, Assistant Superintendent of the Dacca Nawab Estate used at first to admonish Bholanath thus :—"Why can't you reprimand your wife ? What is all this ridiculous nonsense ?" Bholanath was in a dilemma. People used to make fun of him and ridicule him. When he complained about it to Mother, She would say, "This body does not do anything

of its own will as you all do. Every thing happens of itself." Many people of Bajitpur used to think that She was possessed either by some evil spirit or by some deity. Constantly hearing such comments, Bholanath made several attempts to drive away the spirits out of Mother with the help of exorcists. But these persons would themselves become overwhelmed with awe and astonishment when they approached Her and talked with Her. They recovered themselves only when they implored Her forgiveness. After some time when Bhudev Babu and others became convinced of the divine power of Mother, Bhudev Babu came to entertain such a high opinion about Her that he took *Diksha* from Bholanath. When he sometimes revives the memory of those days now, he wonders at his own obtuseness of intellect then. Even those who recognised the spiritual character of these manifestations in Mother, such as Srijut Nishi Kanta Bhattacharjya, one of Her cousins, were slow to fully appreciate Her real character. Later on after witnessing some supernatural manifestations of Mother, Nishi Babu was very much impressed and asked Mother, "Who are you?" Her reply was "पूर्ण"

ब्रह्म नारायण", (the absolute Brahma in the form of *Narayana* or *Visnu*).

Besides the lack of appreciation and much opposition, that Mother was subjected to at that period, there was another obstacle She had to face. Bholanath would at times approach Mother with demands as Her husband. At such moments Her body would become so rigid and corpse-like or looked so enormous, or shrank into such a small size that he would be full of dread. Sometimes at a touch of Mother's body his lower instincts would vanish altogether. The downward trend of his mind would be at once directed to higher channels. When Bholanath gradually began to realise the divine purity and sanctity of Mother, he came to regard Her as Mother and called Her so. Mother also later on used to call Bholanath "Gopal" (child Krishna).

In 1924, Bholanath lost his job, left Bajitpur and came to Dacca in search of employment. When he failed to secure any in spite of his efforts, he prepared to leave Dacca in disappointment. Mother asked him to wait for three days more. Exactly on the third day, Bholanath got an offer as Superintendent of the Shahbag

gardens of the Nawab of Dacca. It was during Her stay at Shahbag that devotees came gradually to Her and recognised Her as Universal Mother,—a recognition which has grown in volume and intensity with the passage of time. Here too, many supernatural manifestations in Mother were witnessed as also many interesting instances of Her all-embracing love for Her children.

One day at Shahbag, while *Kirtan* was in progress with great fervour, Mother passed into *Bhava*. There was a spacious tomb of a Muslim saint (*Fakir*) at Shahbag, not far away from where Mother stayed. In that state of *Bhava*, Mother came out of the *Kirtan* hall and proceeded very fast to the tomb followed by most of the people present there. That day a Muslim was among the spectators. He too went there along with the rest and opened the door of the tomb. As soon as Mother stepped inside, She began to recite very loudly the *Kalmas* of the Holy Quoran and performed the *Namaj*. All persons were amazed and wondered how mother had learnt it all. When asked, She said, "This body does not do anything intentionally as you happen to do. All the

ceremonies of *Namaj* came from within of their own accord. The words, the tone, the mode, everything came naturally and spontaneously. Along with them, also the meaning of the words used in the *Namaj* became revealed from within. Everything cannot always be explained to all. But whenever anything happens, the entire meaning stands revealed within".* In other words, nothing is unknown to Mother; things become outwardly revealed in obedience to Her *Kheyal*.

For a long time, Mother has not taken Her meals or drunk water with Her own hands. Some one has to feed Her. Many people enquire about this; so we give below the facts known to us in this connection.

While at Shahbag, Mother gave up taking meals with Her own hand. One day while taking Her meal, She saw that Her hand moved downwards instead of going upwards to the mouth. From this She understood that taking meals with Her own hand was coming to an end. A few days after this, before sitting down

* *Matrī Darsan* p. 105-106.

for Her meal, She declared, "From to-day Khukuni* will feed this body. In her absence one of you may do so." Since that day taking meals with Her own hands has ceased completely. In this connection, Mother once said, "I see that all hands are my hands. I do take food with my own hand."†

In 1932, Mother left Dacca. As She was consoling the devotees for the coming separation, Bhaiji (Srijut Jyotis Chandra Roy, an ardent devotee of Mother) came in. As soon as She saw him, She declared, "You will have to come with this body". That same night She left with Bholanath and Bhaiji for Dehra-Dun. At Dehra-Dun hearing that there was a quiet village called Raipur, not far away, Mother came there and stayed at an old Siva temple for about 9 months. During this period, She went out once on a short visit to Tarapith (Bengal).

Their life at Raipur was one of extreme simplicity and austerity. Mother wore practically but one piece of cloth. There was none to comb

* One of Her devotees, Gurupriya Devi, known as "Didi."

† Matri Dars'an p. 87.

Her hair so that they became matted and formed a sort of crown on Her head. We have heard from Her and also seen from Her photographs at this period that She looked like a young *Brahmacharini*, one devoted to a life of celibacy and spiritual culture. Their food consisted of simple meals, boiled vegetables or *roti* (unleavened bread). It was made a rule that they should take only what was available in the village of Raipur and nothing was to be procured from outside. There was deliberately no provision at all for light during the night. They would finish their meals before dusk and retire to their respective places of rest for the night. Raipur is situated in a low valley of the Sub-Himalayas. The building was old and there were no doors or windows. The place abounded in snakes and scorpions but no precautions were taken to guard against them.

The continued presence of these strangers in the solitary village of Raipur naturally gave rise to all sorts of wild speculations regarding them. Most of the people there were under the impression that Bholanath was a very wealthy and important person who, realising the vanity of the world, had left his home and come here

to practise religious austerities. Mother had followed Her husband while they took Bhaiji for their servant. The simple, unsophisticated village women used to gather round Mother endeavouring to console Her in various ways in Her supposed miserable plight. Now when Mother narrates the story She does it in such a way, that those who listen are overcome with awe and admiration. It was only after a considerable time when letters began to arrive addressed to Bhaiji giving his designation (I.S.O) etc. that the facts gradually came to light.

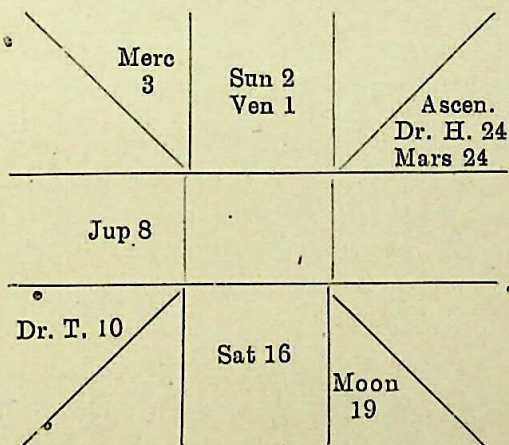
Since then Mother's life and movements have been too widely known to require detailed narration in our present sketch. She spends most of Her time moving from place to place—Solán, Delhi, Simla, Brindaban, Gujérat, Lucknow, Vindhachal, Almora, Benares, Nawadwip, Calcutta, Dacca, Behrampur, Chittagong, etc. Generally Mother does not stay in one place for a long time. On being asked about this, She is generally heard to say, "Just as you go about from one room to another or stroll about in a garden, so also this body moves about. There is but one room. This

body neither goes away or comes to any place."*

Mother's horoscope is given below so that persons interested in astrology may read a little of the course of Her life from it.

MOTHER'S HOROSCOPE

Born at 3 A. M. 30th April, 1896



* Matri Darsan, p. 164

MOTHER—THEN AND NOW.

Gour Gopal Mukhopadhyaya

The first glimpse of Mother was granted to me at Dacca early in 1925. My father, Sj. Pran Gopal Mukhopadhyaya, was in service there at the time and Mother used to vouchsafe occasional visits to our home. Living in those days a purely domestic life, She was then unknown to the world and unsought. In fact, our first contact with Her was at a time when Her own family looked askance at Her, wondering if Her raptures were not perhaps pathological symptoms rather than signs of spiritual exaltation. They were naturally more at pains to conceal what to them at the time was a disturbing and embarrassing domestic problem than to publicise it. My first impression of Mother was of a person, shy and reticent but calm and self-possessed, with an aura of sweetness and peace that commanded spontaneous homage. The few questions She was pleased to ask me about my health and welfare were put through my mother.

Mother's light might have remained hidden for sometime yet, had not Providence decided to step in at the moment and take a hand in Her dawning revelation. Come to think of it, it could have been nothing short of a divine dispensation which brought my father, unbidden and fortuitous to Her sequestered altar. It was my father's habit to go out to Ramna for his morning walk and he was often accompanied by his esteemed friend, Professor Nani Gopal Bandhopadhyaya of the Dacca University. This was in November 1924. Lowering clouds made my father cut short his walk one morning but the professor was not one to miss his full round. Mother was at Shahbagh at this period. Caught in the rain, Professor Bandopadhyaya had taken shelter under a tree, right in front of Shahbagh. By the way, the garden was then out of bounds for the public. A relation of Mother's, the elder brother of Her consort, saw the professor in distress and very kindly came out to take him along to their place. It went on raining and the tedium of a grey morning had inevitably to be lightened by casual conversation. Eventually, the same morning, the professor was taken into confidence and the perplexities of the

. . .

family over Mother's disturbing seizures were laid bare before him. With patent embarrassment he was at first asked to keep the matter to himself, but the professor subsequently had their permission to confide it to a person who might possibly throw a helpful light on this obscure phenomenon. He came straight to Sj. Pran Gopal Mukhopadhyaya with his wondrous tale.

So they, the professor and my father fixed up a date and hastened to Mother's place at Shahbagh. Even after this passage of time, it is over twenty years now that he had Her first '*Darsan*', there is a thrill of wonder in my father's voice as he narrates the account of his first encounter. Ushered into Her persence. on the very first day, he was enraptured with what to him, was an unmistakable radiation of spirituality or '*sattvika vikara*'. By Grace Divine, a great spiritual planet had swum into his ken, and he was privileged to watch, in humble awe and holy wonder, its resplendent rise. As the days passed, his devotion grew from more to more. At first Mother seemed tongue-tied and reticent, and it was with difficulty that She could be drawn out. But even Her silence was

veritably golden, and a single word, bore a world of meaning and was redolent of Her Passion and Love for the Divine. As Lao Tze, the great Chinese mystic says, "One who knows does not talk.....The sage keeps his mouth shut.....and conveys by silence his instruction. To be taciturn is the natural way". The chanting of God's holy name seemed to ravish Her out of the world of senses and those winged words would transport Her to transcendent regions far above the thud and surge of this querulous world. She would be beatifically oblivious of all and She would dance in Her ecstasy like a little child in sheer inconsequential joy. Ultimately outer consciousness would cease, and there ensued a tempestuous rhythmic rolling on the ground of Her God-possessed body. Like a mountain torrent in spate, the flood of *Mahabhava*, the highest ecstasy would surge and swell through Her body, life and spirit in one majestic sweep. Then followed a state of utter calm, flickerless and still 'peace, perfect peace',—like the sleep of the top at the highest spin. This is the state that has now been for long Her habitation and home. The Alone has taken its flight to the Alone, and

for ever and ever, the beating of the eager wings is stilled, for ever stilled.

In those early days, my father was no less struck by Mother's tireless devotion to domestic duties while Her soul was ever tugging at the body's moorings in its eager voyage to the Infinite.

Another remarkable feature of Her life during this early period was Her almost total abstinence from food, only three to nine counted grains of rice being Her daily fare. Indeed Mother used to feel choked if She tried to force even one grain more down Her throat. This is all of a piece with the experience of the great mystics all the world over, an inevitable phase in their development. Yet She looked the picture of radiant health, and showed not even the faintest sign of fatigue at the end of a hard day's work. Her devotion to Her husband was also exemplary : no work on his behalf was too mean for Her. Her love of Truth, Her strength and courage, and above all Her wonderful receptivity to Divine influence have left a fadeless impress on my father's mind, of these Her early days. My father was expecting to leave Dacca on retiring furlough early in June 1925, and

Mother had not still emerged from Her domestic seclusion. To his importunate questionings as to when She would reveal Herself to the world She replied enigmatically that he would know it all about the 6th Asadha that year on which date the *Ambuvachi* commenced. At that time my father did not expect to be at Dacca till that date, but somehow or other, official relief was late in arriving and it was immediately after the 6th Asadha that he found himself in a position to leave.

On the whole of the appointed day Mother lay in trance, speechless and motionless. In the evening She betook Herself along with Her husband to the Siddheswari temple at Ramna, and there the floodtide of *Mahabhava* came sweeping over Her. Mother had an esoteric affinity with this holy spot, and She had once indicated a site close to this temple as the seat of the *Sadhana* of Bholanathji in a previous birth. This place, then discarded and over-run, was subsequently cleared and fenced around and was later the site of what was Mother's first Asrama. Up till this time Mother's glory was a jealously kept secret, and was shared by my father with just a few *Bhaktas* among whom

were professors, Nalini Kanta Brahma, Girija Sankar Bhattacharya and Atal Bihari Bhattacharya. It was after the 6th Asadha that Mother's privacy was broken, and first in a trickle and then in an ever-swelling stream, people began to flock to Her and receive Her Grace. She *had* arrived.

The first visit that Mother vouchsafed to us after my father had left Dacca was when She came to Deoghar in 1926. The most memorable incident of this visit was Mother's meeting with our Gurudeva, Sri Balananada Brahmachariji Maharaj who welcomed Her with a warmth which only a feeling of spiritual kinship can evoke. For long after and on numerous occasions Sri Gurudeva used to recall the memory of this meeting and pay eloquent testimony to Her *Sattvik* exaltation. During Her visit to the Asram She attended a *kirtan* recital and went into a passionate storm of ecstatic rapture which eventually subsided into radiant calm. Sri Gurudeva later led Mother along with Her consort into his *sanctum sanctorum* and they were closeted together for some time. A year or two later Mother paid us a surprise visit to Deoghar with Her consort.

She was then on Her way to Vindhyaachal and spent a couple of days with us *en route*. My father happened to be away at the time and only my mother and my humble self were at home. She was ineffably kind and sweet to us.

It was after the lapse of a decade, years which had seen Her canonization and during which myriads of *Bhaktas* from all over India had flocked to Her holy feet, that I was privileged to have Her next *Darsan*. It was in Calcutta late in 1939. Not in the privacy of home or the quiet precincts of an *Asram* this time, but amid the din and bustle of the metropolis with constant streams of visitors surging around. It was a far cry from Her demure domesticity at Dacca, and what a sea-change had come over Her ! Her frame now was like *Parvati's*, attenuated by *Tapasya* and ringed by an aureole of sweetness and light. Hers was a presence that radiated peace, 'the peace that passeth understanding', a balm to the 'fretful stir unprofitable and the fever of the world'. And above the storm, an upper-air serenity pervaded Her, and all the time one felt that She was here, yet not here ; astronomically far, yet withal so near. An air of easy mastery and

indubitable poise, the sure-footed tread on what the *Sruti* calls the razor-edge path, was Hers. Majesty was Hers as to one to the manner born and yet there was nothing forbidding about Her with Her childlike simplicity, buoyant good humour and never failing smile. She was an apotheosis of Light, Love, Power, Goodness, Beauty and Truth.

Puerile and pretentious it would be, and indeed laughably so, to try to show up the sun with the aid of a candle, and it would be no less futile to attempt to gauge the depth, immensity and expanse of Mother's illumination with the help of our circumscribed intellect and inhibited soul. All revelation is *Svaprasakasa*—Being at its white-hot incandescence, and only Being can know Being. Enmeshed in our sensuous sheaths as we are, it is only through fortuitous chinks that the Light streaks into our dark deeps and divinely disturbs our sleep of ages. To Mother's Grace we owe that even with the murky minds that are ours we have been able at times to mirror fitful gleams of the Light Divine which emanates from Her. This should be to us at once a solace and a spur.

MA-ANANDAMAYI

Prabhash Chandra Gupta, M.A.

The year was 1938. I was dining at a friend's house. There were others—some known, some unknown. I do not remember now what led the company to talk of religious leaders. But soon started a cynical disparagement of each leader as his name came up for discussion. All I remember now, and that vividly, is a none too pleasant reference to Anandamayī Ma. The last remarks, as I left the friend's house kept ringing in my ears: *SHE IS ONLY A WOMAN*. Did these words indicate indifference or merely an attempt to hide one's real feelings?

It was 1940, I met my only and the most intimate college friend. It was after years of separation. He spoke of Ma. In a flash came the recollection, "*ONLY A WOMAN*." I begged my friend to take me to Her along with him. Niraj did so. I saw Her then and I had my answer. Yes, *SHE WAS A WOMAN*: only love, only purity, innocence, and beauty. And I asked myself in what resided Her most

characteristic virtue ? In good works ? Possibly. In the creation of a beautiful surrounding ? Perhaps. Then I looked in a different direction, and I found it was in Her detachment.

What had but been curiosity became interest and to accompany my friend for a *DARSAN* became my daily routine. She made no disciples and consequently She had no axe to grind. This was something very noble and rare. I had never seen before a mortal being so completely divested of the trammels of the personal and the particular. I had never before seen the Divine gift of impartiality so completely bestowed on an individual.

It made me muse ; it gave me pleasant food for thought. I found myself engaged in arranging a series of creatures according to their diminishing interest in the immediate environment. I began with the *amoeba* and ended with the mathematician. In pure mathematics the maximum of detachment appears to be reached. The mind moves in an infinitely complicated pattern which is absolutely free from temporal considerations. But the mathematician's activity gives him an unfair advantage. He can only be wrong, he cannot cheat. But the metaphysician can. Was I getting partial

to a metaphysician's impartiality? Certainly not. The problems Mother dealt with appeared to be of overwhelming importance when She took them up. They were listened to with rapt attention by a crowd of people composed of the critical and the credulous. She treated the problems with an exactitude as unbiassed as if they were some puzzle in the theory of numbers. A new era in my life dawned. I was to conduct Mother to the theosophical college at Rajghat, Benares. B. Sanjiva Rao, the founder Secretary of the college had come for a *Darsan* and had asked Mother to visit Rajghat. Mr. Rao, my old teacher and at that time my immediate superior, had asked me to act as an escort. It was a great honour. I swelled double with a sense of importance. My heart felt light. It was, as if I had got into an aeroplane which had glided imperceptibly from the ground; with thrilling ease I soared up, higher, ever higher, and then looked out to see the world below. I was filled with excitement, the excitement of discovery. I had never seen the earth look glorious like that before.

I thought of the many questions, those at Rajghat would surely ask. One would ask,

'Where or what am I?' Another, 'To what *cause* do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return?'; A third, 'Whose favour shall I court, whose anger shall I dread?'; and yet another, 'What beings surround me? On whom have I an influence?'; 'Who have any influence on me?' They, I knew would expect philosophy, logic. And in Mother the last vestige of theological prepossessions has been discarded. It is, as if, reason, in all her strength and in all her purity, has come into Her own. And as She talked I first found astonishment in their faces, then a bewilderment, and finally a twilight flicker of comprehension in their eyes. They had never thought that they could be answered so simply. As Mr. Rao escorted Her to the waiting conveyance, he remarked to me, 'Prabhash, that is a great soul I have met today.'

Time passed. I have had many opportunities to be present in concourses of people pouring in for a *Darsan*, at the Iron Bridge Dharamsala, at Lucknow, at my old school comrade's (Rai Bahadur Gur Bux Singh's) residence at the Model Houses, Lucknow, at the Lucknow junction waiting rooms, platforms, and at

Rai-Bareilly. I have seen groups of men and women gazing with undemonstrative love and esteem and other groups fussing about in a delirium of joy. Sentiment and sentimentalism luxuriating together? And through them all Mother smiled serene. She was "the desire of the heart also the light of the eye". "And it pleased me to compare that radiance of serenity to the emanations from the Sun "whose beam is the earth's axle, whose beat is its year, and whose breath is its ocean." For a flitting moment life unfolded itself to me in its power of love, joy and admiration. As the words fall from Her lips a thrill pulsates through the veins and one almost sees that.

.The world has not been broken by narrow domestic walls ; the clear stream of knowledge has not lost its way in the dreary desert sands of dead habits ; "The mind is without fear and knowledge is free."

MOTHER AND HER WAYS

(*By Swami Paramananda*)

There are some remarkable features and aspects of Mother's personality. What strikes us most in the first place is the complete absence in Her of the various passions and qualities natural to all living creatures (Jiva) such as anger, greed, envy, hatred, desire, aversion, hypocrisy, falsehood etc. These have never been observed in Her either by ourselves or by those who have been in Her company for a long time. Even under the gravest provocation She is always the same, serene, unperturbed, firmly poised like the Himalayas. Mother's patience, endurance, simplicity, Her benign appearance, and Her care-free, cheerful face lit up with charming smile and Her nature ever free from dualities such as happiness and misery, likes and dislikes, are indeed unique. When we see Her we feel that She does not belong to this body nor does She live in this world of ours.

Equally remarkable and worthy of note, is, in our opinion, Her universal toleration and

love. Mother keeps Her door wide open for all, be they mad, stupid, absolutely unprincipled or worthless,—persons whom everybody avoids. Knowing very well their real character, for nothing is hidden from Her, She welcomes them all with the same smile and pours Her healing compassion and grace upon them all. If we object to Her giving shelter to such people, She says, "Where will they go? This body does not call anybody deliberately. When they come, serve them as much as you can. Every one is His form or image. Knowing them so, try to serve them. He reveals Himself in diverse forms." Such an all-embracing love and mercy as mother's, which denies itself to none, is indeed rarely to be found. Almost everybody offers shelter and protection after first considering a person's worth or fitness. But Mother extends Her protection and mercy to all who seek them, regardless of all considerations of fitness and qualities. Mother is above all sectarianism and tolerates every shade of opinion, variety of religious doctrine or creed. She had no Guru of Her own and had no disciple except Bholanath and makes none now. When requested to initiate somebody She says, "Nothing

deliberate or intentional can be done by this body. In the case of Bholanath, "*Kheyal*", (an urge) came spontaneously. Even now if there arises a *Kheyal* it may happen again. 'No such vow has been taken by this body that it will or will not initiate anybody. Whatever comes off, comes of its own accord.' Having no Guru of Her own, mother belongs to no particular sect (*Sampradaya*). When asked about it, She says, "Leave aside the question of this body. It is but a little child of yours. This body is what each of you thinks it to be. Further, there is but one sect in reality. Everyone is seeking Him. And this body says whatever has been said or is being said about Him is right. For He is infinite; He is one. So whatever anybody says is correct, no matter what sect that person belongs to. What matters is that he should think of Him. All thoughts, except those about Him, are fruitless and painful (वृथा एवं व्यथा)." Again She says—"It is He alone who exists in all forms and He also resides in the formless. So what is needed is that you should think of Him in any way you choose, whether as one with a form or without it. For He is indeed everything;

therefore all who think of Him or seek Him belong to the same sect. Everyone should reason thus that since there is no end or limit to Him, so in whatever manner or with whatever notion, people seek Him, they all belong to the same sect ; for after all they are all seeking Him alone."

Mother says further,—“Some teaching or doctrine is inferior and some superior, or some path is more true and some less ; this body has nothing to do with such controversies and conflicts. Whatever anybody says is right from his standpoint. Each person realises in his own way the Infinite and the Supreme Reality. So it is but natural, that there must be diversity or variety in men's attempts to express or reveal Him. In that Infinite Reality is to be found the unity and harmony that subsists even in the midst of conflicting and divergent doctrines and opinions. Nothing is outside the Infinite Totality or the Whole (अखण्ड), not even the “non-existent.”

As all sects and doctrines are equal to Mother, followers and aspirants of every sect come to Her and obtain peace and joy from Her.

Whatever be the path one follows, whatever be one's '*Bhava*' (attitude or sentiment), everyone feels blessed by receiving favour and grace from Mother, each according to his *Sanskaras* (tendencies and dispositions). We have heard from many people belonging to the different *Asramas* and orders of Hindu life such as *Brahmacharies*, *Grihasthas*, *Sannyasis* that the recollection or contemplation of the '*Ista*' (the chosen deity) of each is stimulated or is induced in them when they sit near Mother. Mother too, says that whatever the *Guru* has instructed is right. His instructions should be followed. One can find peace only by doing so. For this reason people of every sect and order of life find peace when they come to Her. Almost everybody feels that Mother loves him the most and so is extremely kind to him and favours him and holds the same doctrine as his.

Let us now say some thing about the word '*Kheyal*' which mother frequently uses. If anyone wants to know something from Mother or requests Her to do something saying, "Mother, you know everything and can do everything", She never says, "I cannot do it, or I do not know it or I have no power to do it." Such expressions:

as "I do not know or cannot do, have never been heard from Mother. Her usual reply in such cases is, "There is no *Kheyal* now ; if circumstances allow, ask again." As far as we have understood, Mother has none of these,—mind, intellect, egoism, found in us nor the three states, waking, dreaming, or sleep. In Mother there is only this state of one-ness with the Infinite or She is Infinity itself. So in Her there is none of the conflict between desire and aversion, mind and intellect etc., yet in a sense everything is there. Mother says, "Here (inside Her) it is all swept and rubbed clean ; there is no thought of any kind. As you will play on it so you will hear." Mother's movements arise directly from the Ultimate Reality or the Supreme Will according to our *Sanskaras*. When our desires correspond to the Supreme Will, then they are fulfilled. That Supreme Will manifesting itself to us according to our *Sanskaras* is probably the "*Kheyal*" of Mother.

. As Mother is absolutely devoid of the gross, narrow 'ego', so the expressions of this ego, as "I shall or I know, I can, I do etc." and their negatives are never heard from Her. Generally Her remarks are liberally sprinkled with a few

"ifs" or qualifying expressions such as "if circumstances are favourable," "if there is no obstacle," "one cannot be certain of a single breath" "let whatever happens happen." Not that She deliberately avoids one kind of language or uses the other, but such words come spontaneously from Her.

There is no end to the extraordinary aspects of Mother's Personality. In fact everything about Her viz. Her laughter, weeping, singing are all supernormal and extraordinary, as those who have had the good fortune to witness and hear them, will testify.

It is almost impossible to convey their special quality through words only. A few more interesting details may be added. Mother sees disembodied souls of saints, *sadhus* etc. She says, "they are sitting here round about this body just as you are. Only you cannot see them." Once She said,— "There are so many of those saints and others sitting inside the room that there is hardly any space available." She sees also the forms of diseases and often describes them. She says,— "Every disease has its own peculiar form, when such forms come before this body they are not forbidden or opposed,

just as you are not prevented from coming. Occasionally, however, they may be opposed or have their destination changed,—suppose, for example, they might be coming in this direction but they are deflected in a different way.

It is impossible to understand the strange, extraordinary personality of Mother unless She of Her own accord reveals Herself to us. Mother's teachings are universal, simple and touching to the heart. She never preaches or gives instruction with any definite purpose. She also says, "One gets as much as one is destined to get from this body in the light of his *Bhava*."

TWELVE SUGGESTIONS OF BHAIJI FOR OBTAINING THE BLESSINGS OF MOTHER

Circulated in Bengali by brother Abanimohon Sarma on the eve of Mother's Forty-fifth Birth-day Celebrations. Translated into English by G. C. Dasgupta

(I) Mother Anandamayi is the Visible Embodiment of what we conceive by the word Bhagawan or God. We must endeavour to enthrone Her in our heart and allow Her influence to colour our actions, thoughts and meditations. We must have a firm conviction that Her Body and all its sportive activities are far beyond the bounds of Nature and that She is the ONE object of our highest adoration. If we can develop this outlook, we shall require no other help for our spiritual advancement.

(II) If we fail to contemplate Mother as ONE far above and beyond the limitations of Her visible Form, we should take up, for our ideal, any one of Her numerous Graces e.g. dedication of Her all to selfless service to humanity, Her ever-flowing cheerfulness, Her serenity of mind and body, Her magnanimity, Her treatment of all creatures with an equal eye, and should shape our conduct accordingly.

(III) If we have the good luck to come in touch with Her ways of life, Her conversation, Her expressions of joy, Her playful humour, Her graceful movements, and Her modes of eating and dressing, we should not be carried

away by our ordinary, crude judgment on life and things, but try to appreciate the beauty and probe the mystery of each one of Her actions. Let there be a conviction growing and developing in our heart about their importance in our life.

(IV) We must always remember that She is absolutely free ; nothing can restrict Her ways. In us there is always a conflict of will, to do or not to do, to be or not to be ; such conflicts have no place in Her way of life. She moves about without any preconceived motive. Whoever approaches Her, finds always that Her Supreme Will functions just to meet our own actual welfare-requirements.

(V) Let a faith grow in our heart that what She does or what happens under Her eyes, be it to our liking or not, must have some hidden objective, and that too, for our ultimate welfare. With such a conviction let us learn to accept all Her words and decisions in all humility.

(VI) If through our good luck any of us receive any direction from Mother, though such chances are very rare indeed, we must, without any scruple whatsoever, guide our mind and intelligence to implicitly carry it out ; there must be no compromise thereof in the light of our individual judgment.

(VII) For our own good it is necessary that Mother should be absolutely unobstructed in Her moods and actions—not even opposing thought-currents should be allowed to flow from us. Let Her *Kheyal* always prevail : even by way of protecting Her body, or looking after Her physical comforts or discomforts, there must be no scope for the exercise of our judgment. Any hint or suggestion

emanating from Her must needs be carried out without reserve ; failing that we should always develop the attitude of a silent on-looker of Her Lila.

(VIII) Mother begs only a few minutes' time from every one of us to be spent in contemplation of the Divine. This brief period should be dedicated for ever to God ; no earthly thoughts must be allowed to creep in during it. It is far easier to obtain Her grace by earnest devotion and prayer than by rendering Her any personal service.

(IX) To make a real approach to Mother or to gratify our longing to touch Her sacred feet, our mind should be, at least, for the time being, as transparent as a mirror without any film of worldly thought over it. The intensity of our satisfaction will be in proportion to the keenness of our desire, strength of our faith and devotion to Her, and to the sincerity of the spirit of our self-surrender.

(X) All of us are equal in Mother's eyes. The degree of our love and adoration for Her is the only thread that links us to Her feet. We obtain as much of Her grace as we are capable of love and adoration for Her.

(XI) Always REMEMBER that Her words are fulfilled to the letter. Her memory knows no lapse nor change under the pressure of time.

(XII) We must never slacken our faith in the ever-bounteous flow of Her Mercy, Grace and Compassion for all men, in all their successes and failures ; we must not forget for a moment that all the worries and tribulations of our life, all our difficulties and disasters are the inevitable products of our past actions. To counteract them, strenuous *sadhana* on our part is absolutely necessary.

THE GREAT MA ANANDAMAYI

G. C. Sen Gupta.

Ma is all a blissful cry. It is the natural cry of the heart of all human beings from the young to the old. It is one through which they can also invoke the aid and grace of the Divine Mother-Power that rules the Universe. Hers is the entire world of creation, the material, the mental and the spiritual; nay, She exists beyond it too.

All the happenings of the universe have their origin in that great Mother-Power. Our ignorance leads us to think that we ourselves work out our own destiny and that of the nations of the world. All this is but a bewildering illusion. She plays out Her Lila by creating the Universe, maintaining it, and finally absorbing it into Her Eternal Being. She is Herself the illusion of *Maya* too, that blinds people with the notion of being separate and independent entities and agents.

But the same Mother that darkens our vision with ignorance caused by Her *Maya*,

appears also as our Liberator and Deliverer from its bondage. In this aspect she is the source of all Bliss, Peace and Wisdom. She is an ever-flowing stream of mercy that constantly and equally balms all Her children without making any difference whatsoever. Her mother-heart is open to all, in order that they may be led on gradually to the highest good, towards the goal of self-realisation, when the soul sees, in a flash, the Truth and becomes free from all bondage. The great Ma has, out of Her infinite kindness, provided many means whereby Her children may gradually achieve their liberation. She appears in them as their working power, as intelligence, and as conscience guiding them along the right path. Through pleasure and pain, joys and sorrows, She is incessantly teaching them to discriminate the right from the wrong, good from the evil.

If there be complete surrender and sincere devotion then indeed the Mother-Power Herself comes down to us in human form to grasp us by the hand and lead us towards Eternal Joy and Peace. An Incarnation is only a manifestation of the great Ma in some definite human form. It may be termed a descent or the coming down.

of Mother-Power. It is an event of supreme importance, not only for individuals but also for the entire world, and its significance is far beyond human comprehension.

At first the fact of incarnation is not perceived clearly by many. Here and there a few blessed souls become cognisant of the presence of Mother Divine in their midst and go mad with delight and wonder. For one attribute of the Divine Mother in human form is the superb attraction, the irresistible charm which She wields and by which She becomes widely known. All we have to do is to open our eyes and see Her in Her glory, recognise Her as our Mother. We shall not have to do anything more, for Mother will do all the rest. Then the path of *Sadhana* becomes natural and easy. We feel impelled to lay our burdens at Her feet, to feel Her Presence in our heart and to live only to do Her will in our lives. What further consummation can a human heart wish for ?

It is our clear conviction that the Supreme Mother-Power, as Mother Anandamayi, is working out the regeneration of humanity and its salvation. She stands out alone in Her sublime grandeur, in Her purity and glory.

How wonderful are Her ways with Her children ! She is all Mercy and Grace, ever willing and ready to help them in every way towards purity, power and joy. Yet She is free as air and it is impossible to control Her movements in any way. She is above all earthly influences of men and nature and plays Her part with an exuberance of pure joy. No description of Her earthly existence and activities can reveal Her adequately. She moves in our midst and freely mixes with us and plays perfectly the human game with divine beauty ; but we always come to feel that She stands far above all in a region where all our intelligence fails to reach.

We may have different opinions about Her according to the limited range of our devotion and intellect. But She moves serenely in Her Divine course, enkindling our hearts, and purifying us of our weakness and ignorance and leading us towards the Eternal Life, full of joy, peace and light.

Let us all endeavour to know the great Mother in our midst. The recognition of Mother and Self-realisation go hand in hand. Intoxicated by a glimpse of Mother, a person feels an ardent striving for absolute surrender, casting

off all ambition and desires for enjoyment. He begins to unfold himself more and more and finds himself illumined by flashes of Divine light which transforms his inner and outer life slowly but surely. He finally comes to feel that the great Mother Power wraps him round with a loving embrace.

But how futile is our effort to touch upon even a fringe of what Mother Anandamayi stands for and is doing for Her children ! How She welcomes people of all religions and creeds, Hindus, Moslems, Christians and Parsis ! How She takes a man where he stands without shaking in the least his religious beliefs and helps him towards self-realisation ! How She pours out Her grace and kindness on all,—saints and sinners, rich and poor, regardless of their failings and weaknesses ! Our duty and also our joy lies in submitting ourselves wholly to Her will with a heart full of devotion, and in making ourselves Her instruments to be employed in any manner She chooses. Mother Anandamayi said, "*Hold fast and you will never witness a fall.*" Let us remember this and hold fast to Her.

HOLY MOTHER ANANDAMAYI

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Can a son adequately describe the feelings he bears towards his Mother? Even if one wishes, can he find the requisite language to do so? Language retires baffled from the attempt. All that I can say is that my entire outlook on life has been changed since I first touched the Holy feet of Mother.

It was possibly in the month of January or February 1937, while I was at Cox's Bazar in the District of Chittagong that I met Mother for the first time. She stayed there for more than a month mainly through the earnest requests of S^j. Bankim Chandra Chaudhuri, a devoted *Bhakta* of Mother and closely related to Bhairji. Before this I was passing my days as millions do, quite unconcerned about the real bliss and good of life (श्रेयस्). But after that a complete *transformation* came upon me, nay, on all the members of my family.

‘How did mother bring about this change ?’ one may pertinently ask. Certainly not by too many words or discussions, but only through Her blessed, tranquil, magnetic looks, so winning and irresistible. Every body knows that Mother does not talk much. She answers only when questioned. But Her serene, joyful gaze, charged with great compassion for suffering humanity, exerts a compelling influence, an almost hypnotic power of attraction. I have seen people with little or no faith in matters religious or spiritual, coming daily to Mother ; but when questioned they simply answer, “We do not know why, but as soon as evening approaches, we feel we must go to Her.”

To attempt to portray Mother is a tremendously difficult task and one quite beyond my powers. *Sri Chaitanya Charita-Mrita* says that the *Lila* of God is कोटी-समुद्र-गम्भीर—“Unfathomable and sombre like the depth of a million oceans”. I shall here content myself with only touching upon a few questions which may naturally arise in the mind in connection with Mother. “Who is She really ? Is She Goddess *Durgā* or *Kali* ? or is She only a *Sadhika* or an ordinary pious lady ?” When such a

question was put to Mother Herself by Swami Dayananda of *Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal*, Her reply was "What do you think of me, my son? I am whatever you may think me to be."* This reminds us at once of what lord Sri Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita,—

“ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्”†

"Howsoever men approach me, even so do I reveal Myself to them."

Instances are not wanting when a few fortunate souls have been blessed with the actual sight of Mother in various Divine Forms. In my humble opinion, if any body wants to know who Mother is, he should approach Her with *Sraddha* or reverence, fervently praying to Her to reveal Her true Self to him.

We are reminded of the profound saying of Sri Ram Krishna, "The Police sergeant with his bull's eye lantern sees every body but no one can see him, and if one wants to see the face of the sergeant, he has to say to him, 'Please, Sir, turn your own light on your own face, so that I may see you.'" So it is with Mother too. If

* See P. 14, Editors † गीता ४।५।६

only any body entreats Her to reveal Her true Self, She will do so if She pleases.

To me it seems that such questions as these are quite useless and unprofitable. Be She whatever She may be, the wise ones are ever eager to drink deep from the sacred fountain of bliss flowing down from the Holy feet of Mother. As Sri Sri Ram Krishna puts it, "What is the use of taking stock of caskets of wine, kept in the cellar? One peg is sufficient to intoxicate me."

Learned discourses and discussions about Mother can be carried on *ad infinitum*, but these would be only intellectual luxury and a sort of mental gymnastics. It would be far more profitable to sit silently at Her feet, with a spirit of reverence and love and ask for Her Grace (कृपा). Lucky are those that believe. "Blessed are the Children of God for Heaven is for them." *The Chaitanya Charitamrita* says:

अरसज्ञ काक चुषे ज्ञान निम्ब फले ।

रसज्ञ कोकिल खाय प्रेमान्ममुकुले ॥

• अभागिया ज्ञानी आस्वादये शुष्क ज्ञान ।

• • कृष्णप्रेमामृत पान करे भाग्यवान् ॥*

• • * चैतन्य चरितामृत मध्य, ली, ८१६८

The sum and substance of the above is that intellectuals (ज्ञानौ) like the crow taste only the bitter fruits of *Neem* but like the Cuckoo the soft mango buds are tasted by *Bhaktas* who drink the nectar of God's love.

Many *Bhaktas* of Mother will testify that their life has undergone a complete change and they have attained some treasures which far excel all earthly ones and have tasted the highest ecstasy in their lives.

Cynics are not rare who sneer at the idea that God can take human form. The question is as old as the world. This is not to be wondered at since the truth about incarnations of God is baffling to human intelligence. In *Srimad Bhagawat Gita*, the Lord says :

अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम् ।

Ignorant people steeped in illusion, disparage God when He reveals Himself in human form.

The fact of Divine Incarnation is not to be understood by reason and reflection but by intuition or by natural urges like श्रद्धा, भक्ति etc. from one's inmost heart.

Those who have read the *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* know that the highest form of *Lila* of the Divine is when he lays aside his 'Aisvarya and Bibhuti' (ऐश्वर्य and विभूति),

powers and glories that keep men away from God and when he assumes the gentle human form. God appears with "*Paripurna Madhurya*, perfect sweetness and joy (परिपूर्ण माधुर्य) in नरलीला or human incarnation so that men may love him just as they love their parents, children, wives, friends and other near and dear ones. Such is the overflowing love of God that he comes amidst us, beomes our son or daughter, our friend or mother, but we, deluded mortals, still keep away from Him owing to the obduracy of our heart.

The following lines of *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* are apposite :—

कृष्णेर यतेक खेला, सर्वोत्तम नरलीला
नरवपु ताहार स्वरूप ।†

The idea of the above lines is that the best of Divine Lila is in human form. God wants to come in close touch with human beings just as if He were one of themselves, without manifesting any visible awe-inspiring attribute of His. So He came once to *Brindaban* as a simple cow-herd and tended cattle and mixed freely with the *Brajabasis* who gave Him their

† चैतन्यचरितामृत, मध्यलीला २१३ परिच्छेद ।

unallowed love. He was even chastised by the Gopis and this chastisement was more prized by the Lord than the best Vedic hymns.

The discussions of Divine Lila are, in my opinion, not entirely unconnected with the mission of Holy Mother. To understand Mother, we should remember *Sri Krishna Lila*; only in the light of that, can we understand Mother's activities amongst us. But to do so, it is also necessary to have reverence in the heart and intense desire for the Grace of God (भगवत्कृपा). *Lila* can then be perceived by *Bhaktas* in their pure heart. The *Chaitanya Charitamrita* says, "भक्तेर हृदये कृष्णेर सतत विश्राम" Lord Krishna reposes in the heart *Bhaktas* at all times.

It is only in a pure heart that God's grace descends. Make your heart pure and free of earthly passions and you will perceive the Divine *Lila*. As for myself, I believe in my heart of hearts that the Holy Mother is no other than the Goddess *Mahamaya* who has come into our midst for our welfare and for the good of the world. But such is Her *Gauna Maya* (गौणमाया) that it gives rise to doubts in our minds. I shall be false to myself if I say that I had no such doubts and even now at times

I do not yield to them. But I know that this is due to Maya. "She causes such illusions. She is *Mahamaya* and *Mahamoha*." We read in *Sri Chandi*,

महाविद्या महामाया महामेधा महास्मृति ।

महामोहा च भवती महादेवी महासुरी ॥ *

The Sruti says,—

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो

न मेधया न बहुना श्रतेन ।

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य

स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥†

The Atman or Divine is attainable neither by well-ordered words and phrases, nor by reading of scriptures nor by subtle intellect. The Atman or the Divine embraces only a chosen few and showers His blessing on one He chooses according to His sweet will.

It is Divine *Kripa* we must pray for.

* श्रीश्री चण्डी प्र. च १।७७

† कठ उ ; १।२।२३

A FEW DAYS WITH MOTHER

Madan Mohan Misra, Rai Bareilly

The *Dashera* of 1945 (October) will remain memorable in the history of Rai Bareilly. In most towns of U. P., this festival season witnesses the usual *Ram Lila* celebrations lasting for nearly a fortnight culminating on the *Dasami* in the burning of the effigy of the demon *Ravana*. But this year the people of Rae-Bareilly had the rare good fortune of having the Holy Sri Sri Anandamayi Mata in their midst during the *Dashera* week and also of witnessing the celebration of Sri Sri Durga Puja with all due eclat and ceremony, probably for the first time in the history of the town.

I awoke to the fact of the Holy Mother's presence in our town by the sight of a large number of Her devotees bustling about in the streets night and day, stirring its usual quiet. My curiosity was aroused and I resolved to go down and see what was happening.

Arriving at the mango-grove in front of the "Nain House" I found that a beautifully deco-

rated spacious *shamiana* had been set up and under it the image of the Goddess Durga with her companions and satellites had been installed. It was indeed an impressive sight.

The whole grove was crowded with people of all classes rich and poor, men, women and children including visitors of high social status from different towns,—judges, lawyers, doctors, all agog with excitement and eager for the *Darsan*, of Mother. Motor cars, buggies, tongas thronged the place as in a Mela or an exhibition. A group of *Pujaris* was reciting the Sapta-Sati Durga Path (the exploits of the Goddess in Sanskrit Verse). The whole place throbbed and hummed with life and activity of different kinds. The melodious chant, the perfumed smoke of incense and the hubbub of the people gathered there, filled the atmosphere and infused even into the most matter-of-fact person a spirit of devotion and enthusiasm. But the attention of the beholder irresistibly moved between two poles of attraction. On the one side there was the splendour of the artistic image enhanced by all the accessories of Puja flowers, incense, blowing of conches etc. and on the other, the glory of that real and living figure,

Holy Mother Anandamayi. People were seen rustling towards both with eager steps.

I approached the tent where Mother was seated surrounded by a respectful crowd of men and women. Mother favoured me with Her characteristic affectionate glance. I felt I was also an unworthy son of Hers. It is quite possible that every beholder of Mother who believed in Her had the same idea. The universal motherhood of Mother was amazing in its effect. The mere sight of Mother with Her radiant face with its halo of eternal bliss and Her sweet speech made the heart throb with immense joy and created a faith in the Divine.

A desire was aroused in my heart to invite Mother to my house and to worship Her there with all ceremony. But I was informed that She does not go into the house of "*Grihasthas*" (householders) or private individuals. I did not feel much disappointment at this because I had the conviction that if my faith was genuine, Mother would be kind somehow or other.

The readers will be surprised to know that the very next day the silent prayer of my heart was mysteriously acknowledged and granted by Mother. She came to my house of Her own

accord (not inside the house but only into the compound). My joy knew no bounds. My wife and children were happy beyond measure. I realised what a special favour Mother had done me by this gracious act of Hers.

The Puja took its due course. For these few days joy and devotion flowed in the heart of the people assembled as it had never done before. When the Puja was over Mother departed from the town and with Her departure there was an exit of the visitors who had flocked with Her. Now the town wore a deserted look very noticeable by contrast.

After a few days, hearing that Mother had gone to Vindhyachal, I decided to pay a visit to Her during the Dewali, though it was difficult for me to leave my family at the time. But the only figure that was enshrined in my heart now was that of Mother. I came to have a firm belief that if there can be incarnations of God Mother Anandamayee was surely one of them.

When I reached the Vindhyachal Ashram I found Mother, surrounded by devotees, was watching the arrival of visitors from the upper storey. They were trying to guess the identity of the new arrivals from a distance. Rai

Bahadur Satish Chandra Gupta, Government Pleader of Mymensingh, was mentioning my name as a probable corner when I reached the place. I approached Mother and prostrated myself at Her feet with a feeling of great happiness. Mother asked me to rise and seated me near Her with great affection. I felt I had become free from all bonds of attachment. My time there passed very happily. I went and saw some ancient temples in the neighbourhood such as *Asta Bhuja Devi*, *Kali Gufa*, *Sitakund*, etc.

I heard that Mother was going to Benares soon. We too all went there by train. I liked very much the Asram at Benares, a fine three-storied building standing on the banks of the Ganges and I experienced here a happiness that I have never felt elsewhere. I lodged myself in the uppermost floor in a room adjacent to Mother's. But I was asked by a devotee to come down and occupy a room in the lower floor along with others. I obeyed very reluctantly disliking the idea of being away from Mother. At 12 o'clock in the night, Sri Gurupriya Didi came to me saying that Mother wanted me to sleep in the room adjacent to

Hers from where I had brought my bedding down. Needless to say I was overjoyed not only at the prospect of being near Mother but also at this fresh evidence of Mother's kindness and affection for me.

Next day I paid a visit to *Biswanath* temple. Although I had been there several times before, yet everything seemed to pass so smoothly and I met with such facility at every step that I could not help noticing it and attributed it to the kind protection of Mother. While returning I brought a garland and I worshipped and garlanded Her to my heart's content. Even the fact that Mother retained my garland longer than usual filled me with a childish satisfaction.

The idea of returning home appeared unbearable but I was compelled by circumstances to do so. I took leave of Mother who said, "Go and meet again some time." As I again put a garland on Her and prostrated myself at Her feet prior to my departure, She put Her hand on my back and blessed me saying "Narayan." Mother then asked Didi to give me something to eat before I started. I was fed with great affection by several sisters as if I was actually a member of their own family

and then given a send-off. All this took quite a long time and I was afraid I might miss the train but on reaching the station I learnt that the train was late by an hour. My journey home was unexpectedly very comfortable inspite of the great rush.

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MOTHER AND HER SONGS

By Ram Taran Chatterjee M. A. B. L.

Advocate, Calcutta High Court

The following incident regarding Mother took place in October 1938, when I went with my family to Madhupur (S. P.) for a change. While there, I used to spend most of my time, in a neighbouring temple of *Sri Sri Ram-chandraji*. One day, information reached me from Calcutta, that "Mother" had come down there. Whereupon, I felt a strong urge in me to hasten there for Her "*Darsan*"; but, this, I could not do, as many of the members of my family were down with fever at the time. So I had no alternative but to send up my mute prayers for such a "*Darsan*," and, to pass the

day with a very uneasy mind. In the evening, I went to the said temple, as usual, to see the "*Aratrik*." While it was going on, I was intently looking at the image of *Sri Sri Ramchandraji* with my eyes rivetted on its face. But after a time I was taken by surprise to find that the face of the said *Bighraha* appeared to me to have suddenly changed into the feminine face of "Mother", with Her long flowing locks rolling over the shoulders. I was actually taken aback; and, thinking that it might be an optic illusion, I approached the *Bighraha* a few steps nearer, to verify my vision. But, wonder of wonders, the nearer I approached it, the more vivid and brighter became the "Mother's" face there.

The next day, I rushed down to Calcutta and saw "Mother" in the Birla temple on the Ballygunge Maidan. I enquired of Her point blank as to whether or not She had gone to Madhupur the preceding evening. She told me with an exquisite smile (as if She knew everything from before), that She had gone there. On my asking the reason for it, She said;— "Baba, you took me there." She then stopped and spoke no more.

I have had the rare good fortune to hear Her sing, on more occasions than one. And, I can at once say, that such sweet songs, I have never heard before ; nor, are they possible to be sung by any ordinary expert in music. It is next to impossible to give even a rough idea of their heavenly delicacy and sweetness. It is better heard and enjoyed than described.

Mother's songs hold one spell-bound, for the time being, and in suspended animation, so to say, one is made, by a divine force as it were, to hear every little word of it with rapt attention. One is left to no option in the matter. The soft cadence of Her music, the sonorous but enchanting modulation of Her voice, the involuntary expressive movements of Her body in strict consonance with the "timing" of the tune, and the instrumental notes accompanying them, are simply wonderful and ravishing. They all combine to create for us a supernatural world, an unearthly atmosphere, so to say, whereto one feels one is bodily transported, for the time being, by a pull from the above, making one forget all about his earthly surroundings and drenching one to the skin by a soothing shower of nectar (अमृतं) from some remote, unknown, heavenly

regions. The influence of the song changes one into a being surprisingly "rich and strange."

One of the many songs, She sings occasionally is this :—

कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण, कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हे ।

राम राम राम राम, राम राम राम हे ॥

कृष्ण केशव, कृष्ण केशव, कृष्ण केशव, रक्ष माम् ।

राम राघव, राम राघव, राम राघव पाहि माम् ॥

On one particular occasion, when Mother's song was over and the divine melody and cadence of Her voice still ringing in the depths of my soul, I approached Mother with a query as to whether She had any previous knowledge or training in classical music—particularly with respect to Timing (ताल), measure (मान), the scale (ग्रास) and the different Rags and Raginis (रागी, रागिनी) of the Indian music. The reply that came from Her was :—

“बाबा, शिखिनि त किछु, या हये जाय ।”

“My child, I have learnt nothing of the sort. All that happens, comes of itself.”

It surprised me immensely, for Mother's performance that day was strictly in keeping with the orthodox style of Indian music.

MOTHER—THE SOURCE OF JOY AND LOVE

Sarojendra Kumar Dutt
Solicitor, Calcutta High Court.

The first thing that overpowered me was Mother Anandamayi's constant and unceasing cheerfulness. It seems to me that She is the personification of that celestial bliss or Ananda for which all human beings have been seeking and striving for all ages. There must be a fountain of eternal bliss in Her which constantly overflows through Her features, nay, through the expressions of Her whole body and which soothes and pacifies all the worldly cares and tumults of life and gives one a calm serenity and cheerfulness at least for the time being. According to Mother every method pointing onwards to God is true and is likely to take its ardent followers to Him. To Her all seekers of truth are equal, and She imparts with equal grace Her instructions to all who come to Her and seek Her help.

I know of persons who although are initiated disciples of other *Gurus*, came to live with Her for their spiritual advancement upon the death of their Guru. Some such persons openly refused to take Her *Prasad* on the ground that the same to them was "*Uchhista*" * On coming to know of the same Mother said with loud laughter that they acted very properly as they do not take anything without offering the same to their *Gurus* and directed that so long they would live with Her, before She would be fed, some portions of every good dishes should be set apart for them. Oh, what a tolerance and what a consideration for others !

Since the date of my acquaintance with Her, I have never seen Her touching or taking any money. It is reported that She gave away all the gold ornaments and jewelleries presented to Her by Raja Sahib of Suket. I saw Her distributing indiscriminately, on several occasions, many valuable things presented to Her by the *Bhaktas*. It has become almost a custom with Her to give away all that is offered to Her before She leaves the place. I have heard of an

* Residue of food left over after one's meal.

episode that on one occasion when Mother was in a North-western country of India a *Bhakta* gave Her a pair of gold *Churies* which She was made to wear on Her hands. Soon after a stranger lady approached Her and took off one of them from Her person and was about to take away the other, whereupon the *Bhaktas* present began to rebuke the lady, At this Mother laughed and said, "Why are you accusing her? When you put on my person garlands of flowers I soon take them off and give away the same amongst you as *prasad*. What's the difference between this gold ornament and the ornament of flowers? When She has already taken one, why not allow her to take the other too, to please herself?" So saying She spread out the other hand to enable the stranger to take off the other ornament.

She appears not to move even Her finger or to do any act without some divine inspiration from within. The period of Her stay at any particular place and Her movements are very uncertain. Occasions are not uncommon when on 5 minutes' notice Her followers had to pack up bags and baggages and to leave a particular place where a spring of joy had overflowed for

days together by Her presence and where every one expected that She would stay on a few days more. Every movement of Hers is guided by some inspiration which She pleases to call Her "*Kheyal*." No one, not even Her oldest *Bhakta*, has yet been able to get an assurance from Her as to whether She would continue Her stay at a particular place for even a period of the next 24 hours or to do any particular act within a particular time. The best answer which any one has yet been able to obtain from Her, is "*ja haye jay*" (let things happen in their own way).

On several occasions She went out unnoticed and unattended by Her devotees and without even a single pice or a second piece of cloth or even a pot to drink from. Although She does not take food or water with Her own hands and never asks for the same from any one and although She does not wear or change Her clothings Herself yet strangely enough, on every occasion all Her requirements arrived from unexpected quarters and She was spared all risks and difficulties of "*Ajnata Bas*".

Her equanimity of mind is saturated with love for all men. I remember one noon at

Agarpara Thakurbari two of Her *Bhaktas*, one "*Grihi* and a young *Brahmachari*", began to exchange hot words amongst themselves in Mother's presence. The *Brahmachari* was abusing "*Baba Bholanath*" in a very discourteous language and the other gentleman, a stout one, was protesting vehemently thereto, because *Baba Bholanath* was his spiritual Guru. The altercations grew hotter and hotter and both of them became almost mad with rage. We were all anxious to avoid an unseemly incident happening before Mother. When the stout gentleman was about to stop the frolics of the *Brahmachari* by a blow of his fist, Mother spread out Her hand and asked him to deal the blow on Her body and to beat Her to his heart's content until his rage is exhausted. The tone in which She expressed Herself worked like a magic; it brought the parties to their senses. Her face glowed with crimson colour for some time.

She is an embodiment of simplicity and truth. Any one who has come in touch with Her cannot but be struck with the very simple ways of Her livelihood and dress. In Her discourse even on very abstruse subjects, She talks in very simple language which can be

understood even by an illiterate person. Her demeanour and expression are so sweet and Her voice is so divinely melodious that it seems that everything about Her is all honey (मधु) and nothing but honey She talks and disports Herself. She is simple like a child and soft as a flower, yet at times She is harder than a flint and stronger than thunder.

In Mother no body has ever found any differential treatment between the so-called high and low. In Her eyes all men are equal as children, of one God. When mother was putting up at the Kalibari of late Babu Jadunath Kanjilal at Benares flush on the Ganges side one day an old lady clad in a most ordinary dress earnestly requested Mother to sit on her lap. Mother complied with her wishes with loud laughs. Thereupon tears showered down the cheeks of both of them, tears of ecstasy. For a few minutes the whole congregation was electrified with some celestial fire. I shall never forget that scene and the ethereal splendour of Mother's features at that moment which is still floating before my eyes. Hail to thee, Mother, Spring of Celestial Love, a Darling of "Beauty and Joy for ever!"

मातृ-स्तोत्रम्

[काश्यप-विरचितम्]

यस्याः स्मितं हन्ति जगद्वरेण्यं
 ज्योत्स्नेव शश्वन् मनसोऽन्धकारं ।
 वाङ्माधुरी मुग्धकरी च यस्याः
 आवर्जयत्यत्र समस्तलोकान् ॥
 स्नेहेन या भक्तजनानसंख्यान्
 सदात्मसाद्वै कुरुते प्रसन्ना ।
 नमो नमश्चैव नमोऽस्तु तस्यै
 आनन्दमय्यै जगदम्बिकायै ॥ १ ॥

तत्त्वं तु यस्याः परमं निगूढं
 न जीवबुद्धेर्गमनीयमस्ति ।
 या सर्व्वदा ब्रह्मपरायणापि
 मायाविहीनाप्यभियाति साक्षात् ॥
 धैर्य्यक्षमापारगतेव माता
 हीनप्रजानां वरमङ्गलार्थं ।
 नमो नमश्चैव नमोऽस्तु तस्यै
 आनन्दमय्यै जगदम्बिकायै ॥ २ ॥

यस्याः कृपा मे सदुपास्तिभक्ति-
 पराङ्मुखस्यैक इहावलम्बः ।
 योदीयचित्ते कलुषेऽपि हर्ष-
 रसाप्लुतं तत्कुरुते महिम्ना ॥

सर्वार्त्तदानं स्वजनैश्च यस्यै
 एकं हि कृत्यं खलु धीयुतानां ।
 नमो नमश्चैव नमोऽस्तु तस्यै
 आनन्दमय्यै जगदस्विकायै ॥ ३ ॥

1. I bow down to the Blissful Mother of the universe (Sri Sri Anandamayi) ; again, and yet again do I bow down to Her, whose irradiant smile, worshipped by the whole world, dispels all mental darkness, even as moonlight chases away earthly gloom ; the fascinating Sweetness of whose speech draws all to Her ; and Whose Grace makes countless souls Her own.

2. I bow down to the Blissful Mother of the universe ; again, and yet again do I bow down to Her, the deep mystery of whose essential Nature is beyond the comprehension of created beings ; and Who, though living always in the Brahman and free from Maya, has assumed a visible form for the good of Her helpless children as a veritable mother, full of infinite patience, and infinite readiness to pardon transgressions.

3. I bow down to the Blissful Mother of the universe ; again, and yet again do I bow down to Her, whose mercy is my only refuge, averse to worship and devotion as I am ; who, in Her infinite graciousness, manifests Herself even in minds prone to evil thoughts, and fills them with ecstasy and absolute surrender to Whom, together with all near and dear ones, is the sole duty of sensible men.

ERRATA

As the book had practically to be rushed through the Press in order to bring it out before Mother's Birth-day Celebrations on the 19th Baisak, 1353 B. E. some errors have crept in for which we crave the indulgence of readers.

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